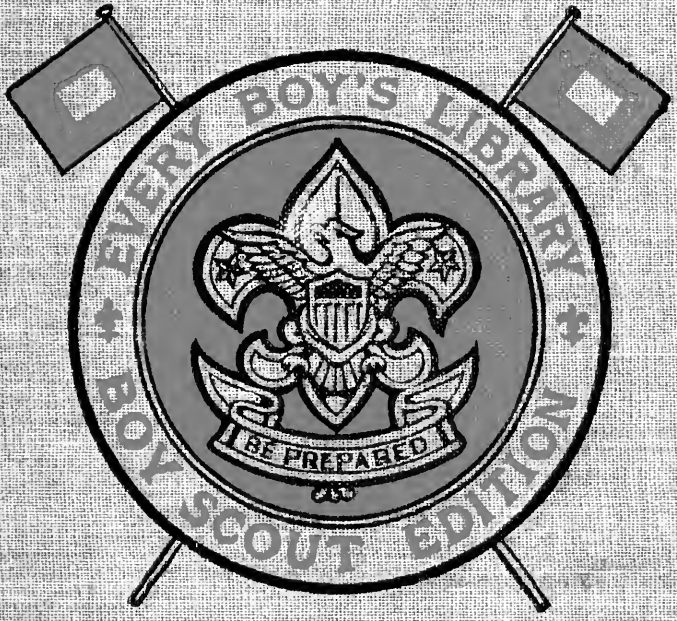
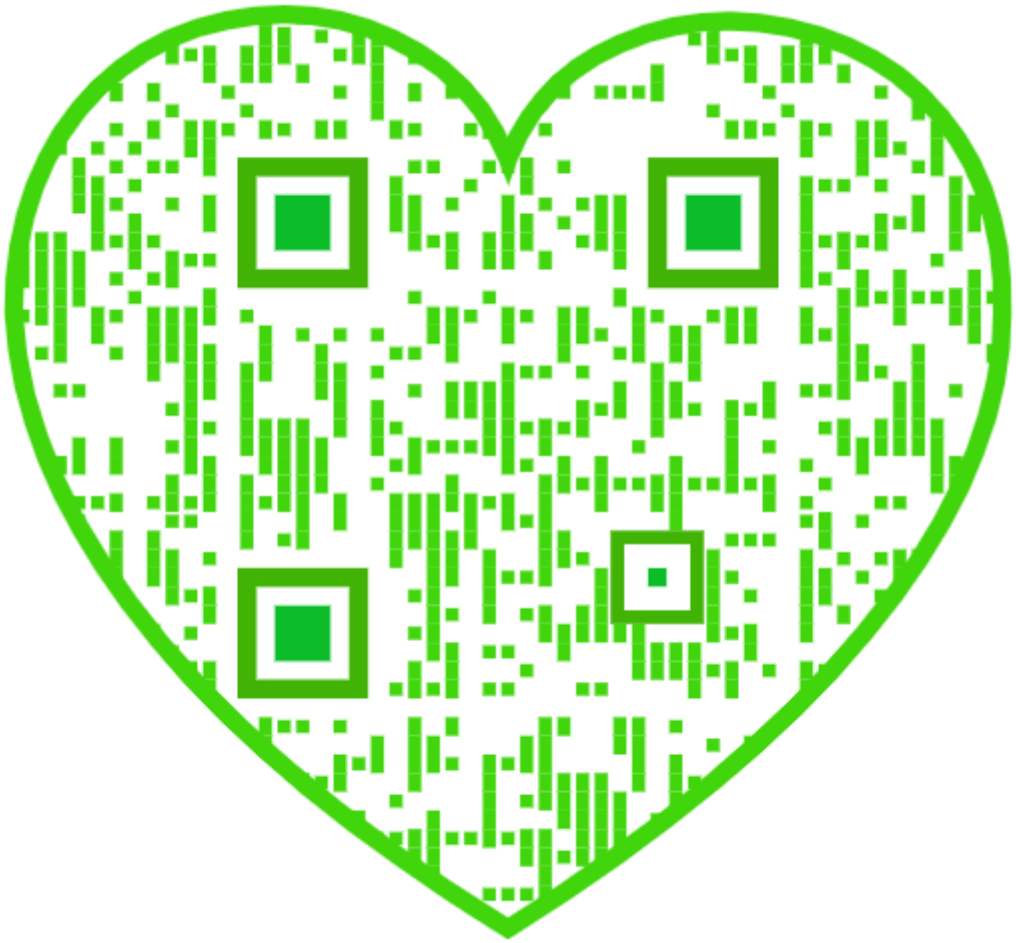
THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S HILL



CHARLES PIERCE BURTON



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July 31st, 1913.

TO THE PUBLIC:-

In the execution of its purpose to give educational value and moral worth to the recreational activities of the boyhood of America, the leaders of the Boy Scout Movement quickly learned that to effectively carry out its program, the boy must be influenced not only in his out-of-door life but also in the diversions of his other leisure moments. It is at such times that the boy is captured by the tales of daring enterprises and adventurous good times. What now is needful is not that his taste should be thwarted but trained. There should constantly be presented to him the books the boy likes best, yet always the books that will be best for the boy. As a matter of fact, however, the boy's taste is being constantly vitiated and exploited by the great mass of cheap juvenile literature.

To help anxiously concerned parents and educators to meet this grave peril, the Library Commission of the Boy Scouts of America has been organized. EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY is the result of their labors. All the books chosen have been approved by them. The Commission is composed of the following members: George F. Bowerman, Librarian, Public Library of the District of Columbia, Washington, D. C.; Harrison W. Craver, Librarian, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Pa.; Claude G. Leland, Superintendent, Bureau of Libraries, Board of Education, New York City;

Ward F. Stevens, Librarian, Pratt Institute Free Library, Brooklyn, New York; together with the Editorial Board of our Movement, William D. Murray, George D. Pratt and Frank Presbrey, with Franklin K. Mathiews, Chief Scout Librarian, as Secretary.

In selecting the books, the Commission has chosen only such as are of interest to boys, the first twenty-five being either works of fiction or stirring stories of adventurous experiences. In later lists, books of a more serious sort will be included. It is hoped that as many as twenty-five may be added to the Library each year.

Thanks are due the several publishers who have helped to inaugurate this new department of our work. Without their co-operation in making available for popular priced editions some of the best books ever published for boys, the promotion of EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY would have been impossible.

We wish, too, to express our heartiest gratitude to the Library Commission, who, without compensation, have placed their vast experience and immense resources at the service of our Movement.

The Commission invites suggestions as to future books to be included in the Library. Librarians, teachers, parents, and all others interested in welfare work for boys, can render a unique service by forwarding to National Headquarters lists of such books as in their judgment would be suitable for EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY.

Signed

James E. West

Chief Scout Executive.

"I HAVE LOST THE CAMP. HELP!"—*Page* 132.

EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY—BOY SCOUT EDITION

THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S HILL

A Sequel to "The Bob's Hill Braves"

BY

CHARLES PIERCE BURTON

AUTHOR OF

THE BOYS OF BOB'S HILL, THE BOB'S CAVE BOYS, AND THE BOB'S HILL BRAVES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

GORDON GRANT

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SRLF
URL

To

THE RAVENS,

Patrol 1, Troop 3, of Aurora, Illinois,

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S HILL

CHAPTER I

"THE BAND" AND THE CAVE

BLACKINTON'S barn is exactly at the foot of Bob's Hill. Phillips's is, too, and so is our garden; but I am not telling about those now. Beyond the barns are apple orchards, reaching halfway up the hill, as you know, if you have read about the doings of the Band.

When they built Blackinton's barn they cut into the hill, so that the roof of the stable slopes clear down to the ground, on the hill side in the orchard. It makes a fine place for us boys to sit and talk about things.

Mrs. Blackinton, who owns the barn, says that maybe climbing around on a roof isn't the best thing in the world for shingles but boys have got to do something and she is willing to take a chance;

only to be as careful as we can, and not to eat any more apples than are necessary to our happiness and well being.

Anyhow, seven of us Bob's Hill boys sat there one Saturday afternoon in May, planning what to do in the long vacation. Every member of the Band was there, not counting Tom Chapin, except Skinny Miller; and we were expecting him every minute.

He was late then, and every little while one of us would stick his head around the edge of the barn to see if he wasn't coming up the driveway from Park Street. We might as well have sat still, for you never can tell which way he will come.

Pa says that Skinny is like the wind, which bloweth whither it listeth. I don't exactly know what he meant but that is what he said, or something like that.

It was quiet in the orchard. There was hardly a sound except the buzzing of insects in the sunshine, and somehow that only seemed to make it more quiet and dreamy.

Suddenly Bill Wilson stood up on the sloping shingles and gave such a warwhoop that it almost made the bark rattle on the trees. When Bill turns his voice loose it is something awful.

We looked up to see what it all was about. He had grabbed Benny Wade by the hair and, giving another yell louder than the first, was pretending to scalp him. Bill always likes to play Indian.

Benny didn't want to be scalped. Although he is two years younger and not nearly so big, he grabbed Bill around the legs and held on until they both slipped and went tumbling down the steep roof to the ground, where they sat, with the rest of us laughing down at them.

Just then we heard another warwhoop, sounding from up the hill somewhere, beyond the orchard. Bill and Benny scrambled to their feet, and we all looked and listened.

We saw nothing for a minute or two. Then something darted through the gate, which leads into the orchard from the hill; dropped down out of sight behind the fence, and commenced crawling backward toward the nearest apple tree. Every

few seconds, it would raise up long enough to point something, which looked like a gun, at the enemy.

"Great snakes!" whispered Bill. "What's that?"

But we could tell in a minute without asking, for when it reached the tree it stood up and peered around the trunk, aiming a stick and pretending to fire. We knew then that Skinny was on the way.

"It's Skinny!" shouted Benny, throwing a stick at him.

Skinny waved one arm for us to be quiet, then began to wriggle back to the next tree. Making his way slowly from tree to tree, with a quick dash he finally reached the roof, where he felt safe.

"That was a close call, Skinny," said Bill. "I heard a bee buzzin' around out there in the orchard, a few minutes ago."

"Bee, nothin'!" Skinny told him, still pointing with his gun and looking around in every direction. "They pretty near had me surrounded."

That was the beginning of this history, which tells all about the doings of the Band, that set all the people talking about us for miles around.

Perhaps you never heard about the Band; how we found a cave at Peck's Falls, part way up the mountain, and had all kinds of fun playing there and on Bob's Hill. There are eight of us in all. Skinny is captain. His folks call him Gabriel but we don't like that name. Skinny is a good name for him, he is so fat. He can run though, even if he is heavy, and you would think that he could fight some if you had seen him once, when the Gingham Ground Gang got after us.

Benny Wade is the littlest fellow in the bunch but he feels just as big as anybody and sometimes that is almost as good as being big. Besides these there are Harry, Wallie, Chuck, Bill Wilson, Hank Bates,—Oh, yes, I most forgot,—and myself.

My name is John Alexander Smith. The boys call me Pedro, and I have been secretary ever since Tom Chapin found the cave. It's up to me to write the doings of the Band and the minutes of the meetings.

Tom Chapin was our first captain and he meets with us now, whenever he is in town.

The village where we live is in a long, narrow

valley, with little Hoosac River flowing north through the center of it, until it gets beyond the mountain range. Then it turns west and hurries down into the Hudson.

Bob's Hill stands just west of the village and looks down upon the highest steeples. Over the brow of the hill and a little south are Plunkett's woods. West, straight back, a mile or more, begins the timbered slope of old Greylock, which, everybody knows, is the highest mountain in Massachusetts. And in the edge of the first woods, a little back from the road, is the prettiest place you ever sat eyes upon. Grown-up folks call it "the glen," but we boys just say "Peck's Falls." I don't know why, only there is a waterfall there, which begins in a brook, somewhere up on the mountainside, and plays and tumbles along, until finally it pours down from a high cliff into a pool a hundred feet below; then dashes off to join Hoosac River.

A queer-shaped rock, with a high back and narrow ledge, which we call the "pulpit," bridges the ravine in front of the falls, fifty feet and maybe

more, above the rushing water. A little farther down the ravine, at the edge of the stream, is another rock. It will do no harm now to say that our cave is under that rock, because folks have found out about it, although not many know about there being two entrances.

All these things that I have told about belong to us boys. Mr. Plunkett thinks that he owns Plunkett's woods and Bob's Hill. I mean the very top of it. And somebody has been cutting trees off from Greylock, until it looks like a picked chicken in spots. But we call them all ours because we have more fun with them than anybody else does, and it seems to us that things belong to those who get the most out of them.

We knew from the way Skinny was acting that he had something on his mind, so we sat down and waited for him to tell us.

"Fellers," said he, after a while, "we've been Injuns and we've been bandits, and we have had fun, good and plenty. I ain't sayin' that Injuns and bandits are not all right sometimes but——"

"Guess what!" broke in Benny. "We've been

'splorers, too. Don't you remember 'sploring out in Illinois last summer? About LaSalle and that other guy and What's-her-name who fell over the cliff?"

"That was all right, too," said Skinny, "and I couldn't forget it in a thousand years, but I tell you those things are back numbers. They are out of date."

"Never mind about the date," said Hank, "but hurry and get it out of your system. We've got to be something, haven't we? If we ain't Injuns and we ain't bandits, what are we?"

"We are Scouts," shouted Skinny, aiming with his gun and dodging so quickly that he almost slid down the roof.

We all looked at one another in surprise, wondering what he meant. Benny spoke up first.

"What are those things, Skinny?" he asked.

"Why," said Skinny, "haven't you been readin' about 'em? They are—er—they are—er—they're just Scouts, that's all.—They scout around, you know, and do all kinds of stunts."

"Scoot around, you mean," I told him.

"Well, it's the same thing, ain't it?"

"Not for mine," said Bill, shaking his head. "Scouts may be all right, but Injuns and bandits are good enough for me."

"Here's the book, anyhow," said Skinny.

He pulled out of his pocket a little book, which told all about "The Boy Scouts of America."

"That's what we are going to be, the Boy Scouts of America, or part of them. They have members all over the country. We'll call ourselves 'The Boy Scouts of Bob's Hill,' when we have our meetings."

Say, it looked good to the Band, except Bill, after Skinny had read the book to us a little, sitting there on the roof. It was a good deal like what we had been doing, only more so. Even Bill said it was almost as good as being Injuns and when Benny heard about the uniforms he hardly could wait.

"How are we going to do it?" I asked, after we had talked until we were tired.

"That is what I came to tell you about," said Skinny. "Mr. Norton, who teaches my class in Sunday school, is getting one up."

"One what, Skinny?" asked Benny, his eyes bulging out like saucers, he was so interested.

"Something he called a 'patrol.' You see, the Boy Scouts are almost like an army, with all kinds of officers, only they call them different names, and the different companies are called patrols. He is getting up a patrol in the Sunday school and wanted me in that, but when I told him about the Band he said that we could have a patrol of our own, if we wanted to. There are eight of us, you know, and that is just enough. I don't know much about it yet, but Mr. Norton wants me to bring the Band up to his house Monday night and talk it over. He's going to have ice cream; I heard him say so to Mrs. Norton."

When he said that last, he looked at Bill, because Bill liked ice cream, although he didn't seem to think much of the Scout business.

"Will you go?" asked Skinny. "I've got to tell him to-morrow, so he'll know how much ice cream to make."

Benny looked at me and I could see by the way

his eyes were shining that he wanted to go. But Bill never likes to change his mind.

"I think we ought to vote on it," he said, "and have Pedro put it in the minutes of the meetin'."

"Shall I put it down in invisible ink," I asked, "or in the kind that shows?"

We always write our most secret doings in invisible ink, made of lemon juice, so that nobody can read about them. We don't need to read it ourselves, because we know all about it anyway. If we want to, by holding the writing up to a fire we can make the letters show.

"Write it with chalk," said Skinny, "and make the letters a foot high. This is something we want folks to know about."

"Uniforms wouldn't be so very much good," said Benny, "if folks couldn't see us with them on."

Skinny nodded his head; then took a piece of chalk out of his pocket, and commenced to mark on the clapboards, back of the sloping roof.

I thought at first that he was going to write the minutes of the meeting before it happened and was going to kick about it, being secretary. Instead

of that, however, he made a big circle, and in the center of the circle he drew a picture of a tomahawk. Then, after looking at a watch which his folks gave him for Christmas, he put the figures 18 above the tomahawk, and 16 below.

That was our Indian sign. The circle meant our cave at Peck's Falls, that being sort of round. The figures said for us to meet on the eighteenth day of the month, at the sixteenth hour, which would be at four o'clock that very afternoon. We had half an hour in which to get to the cave.

When we saw the Sign we all gave a yell, Bill Wilson louder than anybody, and were going to start for the cave on a jump, but Skinny hissed like a snake and held up one hand for us to keep still.

"My braves," said he, after he had made up a lot of Indian words, which we couldn't understand, only they sounded fierce, "do you want to lose your scalps? You don't know what is waitin' for us on yonder hill."

We didn't, either. If we had, maybe we shouldn't have gone.

"Follow me," said he. "Keep behind the trees until we get out of the forest, and mum's the word!"

So, with Skinny leading, we started, dodging from tree to tree on the hillside, until we came to the orchard fence. After that there were no trees except on the very top.

There is a sort of road leading out of the orchard and winding around the hill, where the walking is easy, but on that side Bob's Hill itself rises almost straight up from the orchards, and the slope is covered with slippery grass, with now and then a big stone sticking its nose out of the ground. To climb it you have to dig in with the sides and heels of your shoes and work hard.

Skinny started straight up and we after him, except Bill, who can climb faster than anybody. He soon was ahead.

As Bill neared the top, forgetting all about danger, Skinny gave a warning hiss. Bill looked back; then dropped to the ground and began to crawl slowly up, pulling at the grass and stones

to help him along. The rest of us waited to see what would happen to Bill.

In a few minutes we saw him stick his head up carefully above the brow of the hill. Then he dodged down out of sight and slid back part way toward us, motioning for us to come on and not to make any noise.

I didn't know what to think of it, for I hadn't really supposed anybody would be there. Skinny is 'most always careful that way because, he says, you never can tell what may happen.

"Gee!" said he, when Bill motioned. "Didn't I tell you they pretty near had me surrounded? Steady now, and mum's the word!"

Slowly we crawled up toward Bill. When we had come up even with him, without a word he crept toward the top of the hill, we crawling along after him, and my heart was pounding like a trip-hammer, partly from the work of climbing and partly because it was scary.

Pretty soon we began to hear voices. The eight of us put our heads up at about the same time; then sank down again out of sight, and I heard

WITH SKINNY LEADING, WE STARTED, DODGING FROM TREE TO TREE.

Skinny whisper, "Jerusalem!" and Bill saying "Great snakes!" to himself.

We lay there for a moment, looking at each other and not knowing what to do. Then Benny spoke up.

"Come on, fellers," said he. "Who's afraid of them? It's only a lot of girls."

That's what it was. About twelve high-school girls were sitting there under a tree, with lunch baskets around, looking at Greylock and waiting for it to be time to eat. There was no way for us to pass without being seen except to go back and around through Plunkett's woods, and we didn't want to do that.

"Let's scare 'em," said Skinny at last. "We'll yell the way we did on Greylock that time we scared the wild cat."

"It's all right to scare 'em," said Hank, "for they haven't any business on our hill. But a girl ain't a wild cat or anything like it, and you never can tell what she will do. They may not scare worth a cent."

"I'll tell you what," I said. "If we all yell,

they'll know that it must be the Band. So let's have only one yell. Give Bill a chance and there will be something doing."

We left Bill and crawled up to where we could see them and they couldn't see us. Then he commenced.

Say, I've heard Bill Wilson a lot of times, but I never heard anything like that. Although I knew what was doing it, shivers chased up and down my back, until I 'most forgot about the girls.

He started with a moan like he was in pain. Then for a minute it sounded as if a whole menagerie had been turned loose, with a dog fight in the middle. From the midst of the dog fight came a blood-curdling screech which died away again in a moan and sob, and then all was still while Bill was getting his breath for another.

It was awful to hear, and the girls didn't wait for another, or even for the sob part. At the first moan they started to their feet, looking around with scared faces, and when the menagerie turned loose away they went on a run.

"Charge, my braves!" cried Skinny, as soon as

he could stop laughing long enough to speak. "Let's surround 'em."

With a yell, we charged across the top of the hill, down the slope beyond and into a field which rose gently up to Plunkett's woods.

Just before the girls reached the woods one of them looked back, saw us, and told the others. I thought they would run harder than ever when they saw us coming, but it was just as Hank said about not knowing what they would do. They turned and stood there, the whole twelve of them, looking so mad that we stopped running and waited to see what would happen.

"We know who you are, Skinny Miller," said the one who had seen us first, "and you ought to be ashamed of yourself. We'll fix you for this."

She said something to the others, which we couldn't hear, and pointed toward us. Then they stooped and each one grabbed a stick from the edge of the woods.

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "I wish I hadn't come."

"Fellers," said Skinny, looking at his watch. "It's 'most four o'clock. We'll have to run like sixty if we get to the cave in time for the meetin'."

There are a lot of boys who never saw a mountain, and the Band, even, never saw the Rockies and big mountains like those. But Greylock is big enough for us. On a summer day, with fleecy clouds chasing over his head like great, white butterflies; sunshine resting on the pine trees, and the mountain smiling down on us with arms outstretched, as if he would gather in all of Massachusetts and a part of Vermont, and the cawing of crows in the Bellows Pipe, and no school to call us back—say, that's living; that is!

Soon we came to the woods and followed along a path until we could hear the rushing and roaring of Peck's Falls in front of us, sounding as if old Greylock himself was talking.

We stopped at Pulpit Rock a minute to see the falls and the foaming pool below; then followed Skinny down the side of the steep ravine to our cave at the edge of the stream.

"The meetin' will come to order," said Skinny,

after we had crawled in and were sitting on the floor. "Are we all here?"

"I am," said Benny, "and I," "and I," "and I," said the others, faster than I could count them.

"All the fellers that want to go to Mr. Norton's," said Skinny, as soon as he had found that everybody was there, "to see about this Scout business—and eat ice cream," he added, looking at Bill when he said it, "mark a cross on the floor of the cave with your knives."

Everybody marked except Bill. He didn't have his knife with him.

"It's all right," said he. "I'll go, anyhow, knife or no knife. I'd rather be an Injun than a Scout any day in the week, but there ain't any use letting that ice cream go to waste."

"'Tis well," said Skinny. "We have spoken."

CHAPTER II

RAVEN PATROL HITS THE TRAIL

WHEN Monday night came, the Band met at Skinny's and went from there to Mr. Norton's. He seemed glad to see us and started in for a good time without saying a word about the Scout business. I was just going to ask him about it when Mrs. Norton brought in the ice cream. After that we were too busy to ask anything.

When at last we had eaten all that we wanted and Bill had put away three dishes, Mr. Norton gathered us around him and said that he would tell us a story, if we wished to hear it.

We told him to go ahead, and, after thinking a moment, he began.

"You boys probably do not remember the Boer war in Africa. You were too young at the time. During that war the Boers surrounded a town called Mafeking. All the able-bodied men were

needed for fighting in order to defend the city and could not be spared for the work of carrying despatches and things like that.

"They had some lively lads in that town. As soon as the boys found out the situation they made up their minds that they could do that kind of work just as well as the men could. They did, too. Back and forth they hurried on bicycles, through a rain of bullets, from fort to fort, carrying messages and scouting. I tell you, those English boys were heroes. I don't see how they escaped being killed. They must have dodged the bullets."

When Skinny heard Mr. Norton speak of their being English boys he looked troubled, because Skinny thinks a lot of the United States of America.

"Is this an English story, Mr. Norton?" he asked. "Because if it is I don't know about it. How about George Washington, Bunker Hill, seeing the whites of the enemy's eyes, and all those things? We named our boat out on Fox River in Illinois, the 'Paul Revere.'"

"Guess what!" put in Benny, laughing at some-

thing he was thinking. "Skinny couldn't dodge any bullets? 'Cause why? He's too fat. They couldn't miss him."

"Aw, what's the matter with you?" said Skinny. "I could dodge as many as you could, I guess. If a bullet hit you there wouldn't be anything left of you; that's what. Why, I——"

"A hero is a hero," said Mr. Norton, before Skinny had time to finish, "and a boy is a boy, I guess, no matter in what country he happens to live. I have heard all about the Band, and I know that if you had been in Mafeking that time you would have been among the first to volunteer for scout service, bullets or no bullets, and Washington or no Washington."

"Hurrah!" yelled Bill, forgetting where he was. "That's the stuff. Injun or no Injun, too. I knew an English boy once, and he was all right. Say, you ought to have seen him in a scrap."

Mr. Norton laughed and went on with his story.

"A few years later Gen. Robert Baden-Powell, who had been colonel in command of the English

forces at Mafeking, got to thinking about those boys in South Africa and how manly it made them to help in the scouting. He liked boys and he made up his mind that if scouting had been good for those boys it would be good for any boys. Not the fighting part, I mean, but the outdoor life, learning to take care of themselves in the wilderness, make camps, build fires, find their way through the forest, follow a trail, and such things. So he called a meeting of a lot of boys and talked to them and showed them how to do it. They played at being Indians mostly."

"They don't have Injuns in England," said Bill, shaking his head, "unless it's in a Wild West show, and that doesn't count."

"You are stopping the story, Bill," Skinny told him. "What's the difference?"

"Well, they don't," grumbled Bill.

"Anyhow," Mr. Norton went on, "the boys enjoyed the play, and the idea spread like wildfire, until now there are Boy Scouts all over the world. In America here Ernest Thompson Seton had much the same idea. He was teaching the boys

woodcraft, camp life, and such things by organizing the Seton Indians that you may have heard about. Then he went to England, where he and General Baden-Powell put their heads together and worked out the Boy Scout idea. In this country the boys are known as 'the Boy Scouts of America,' but nearly every civilized nation has its Boy Scouts under some name or other, and the movement is very popular among the boys.

"I invited you up here to-night to get acquainted with the Band. Skinny, I mean Gabriel, tells me that you are all live wires. I want to know if you will join the Scouts. You can have a patrol of your own, select your own patrol leader and your own patrol animal."

"What's a patrol animal?" we asked.

"Patrol animal? Why, each patrol is named after some animal, and the Scouts all have to be able to imitate its call, so that they can let each other know where they are hiding."

When Mr. Norton told us that you hardly could have heard yourself think for a minute. Mrs. Norton didn't know what had broken loose and came

running in from the next room. Skinny was hissing like a snake; Bill croaked like a frog; Benny cawed like a crow; Hank barked like a dog, and the other boys did something else, and nobody could tell what they were doing.

"You seem to have the right idea," smiled Mr. Norton.

There was a lot more to it, uniforms and rules and signs and all that sort of thing, but that doesn't belong in this history. It didn't take us long to decide that we would go in. Bill Wilson was the craziest one in the bunch.

Mr. Norton thought that we ought to decide on a patrol leader before we went home. We told him that there was nothing to decide.

"Skinny is captain, all right," said Benny, "and the Band is the Band, I guess, whether we are Scouts or Injuns."

"Yes, I'm captain of the Band," Skinny told him, when Mr. Norton waited to see what he had to say about it, "but I don't know about this patrol business. It wouldn't do to vote on it here, anyway. The cave is where we meet. We ought to

vote in the cave, seeing it is summer time. If it was winter we could meet in Pedro's barn."

We left it that way and were so busy during the closing days of school that we didn't have time to think much more about it until Friday. When we came in from afternoon recess, there was the Sign, as big as life, drawn with chalk on the blackboard.

I saw teacher looking at it, sort of puzzled, as if she was wondering what it all was about, and some of the girls were giggling at it. They seemed to think it was a joke of some kind, instead of something important. Anyhow, the Sign said for us to meet at the cave, Saturday, at ten o'clock.

Saturday morning, long before ten, every boy was at our house, that being nearest to the cave. Each one carried a lot of good things to eat, so we should not have to go home for dinner unless we wanted to.

Besides his dinner Hank had with him a little camera, which his folks had given to him on his birthday because he promised not to make any more awful smells with chemicals in the cellar.

Hank was always mixing things to see what would happen and he pretty near blew his house up at one time. He is an inventor, too, and says that when he grows up he is going to make a flying machine. He nearly made one once. He made a kite that would pull us uphill on our sleds.

One time he made a spanking machine which worked with a crank, and when teacher wanted us to lick Bill we spanked him with it. Only we laid a horse hair across the seat of his pants to see what it would do and it broke the machine. Of course, he didn't make the camera, but he had a place down cellar where he developed and printed his pictures after the camera had taken them.

"Gee, fellers," said Skinny, "Hank is goin' to take our pictures. Everybody look pleasant."

"Not on your life," Hank told him. "You'd break the machine; that's what."

We went up through Blackinton's orchard and followed the road around to the top of the hill.

In a field, a little west of the top, the same field where we chased the high-school girls, stand what we call the "twin stones." They are big ones, six

feet high and maybe more. One of these we use for a fireplace. It is near Plunkett's woods, where it is always easy to find dry sticks to burn. A piece of the rock has been split off in such a way that it makes a kind of hearth, with a place between for a fire.

"Let's come back here for dinner," I said. "When we build a fire in the cave the smoke makes our eyes smart. What do you say?"

So we went into the woods and hid our lunch and some potatoes, which we had carried in our pockets to cook, but Hank wouldn't leave his camera. He said it cost too much to let it lie around in the woods. His folks paid three dollars for it.

Then we hurried on to the cave.

"Open sesame!" said Skinny, pounding the outside of the cave with a club, like the robber did in "Arabian Nights."

"Is she open?" asked Bill, who was in a hurry to get in.

Skinny didn't answer. He was peering up and down the ravine to see if anybody was looking.

When he found that no one was in sight he motioned for us to go in.

"Old Long Knife will guard the pass," said he.

And he did, for when I put my head out of the cave a little later to find out why he did not come, he was fighting like sixty. He swung his club and jumped around for a minute; then gave a fearful whack and drew himself up with his arms folded, like an Injun or a bandit.

"Lie there, villain!" he hissed. "Sick semper turn us, and don't you forget it."

After that he came in with his face all red, he had been working so hard. We already had the candle lighted and were ready to begin.

"Fellers," said Skinny, when we all had sat down on the floor in front of him and I had called the roll. "I don't know whether this is the Band or the patrol, or whether we are bandits, or Injuns, or Scouts, and I don't know that it makes much difference. I am captain of the Band, but what we want to find out is, who is leader of the patrol. We could fight for it, perhaps, only I hate to muss my clothes."

Some looked at Bill, for we knew that he kind of wanted to be leader. He would make a good one, too, only it seemed to belong to Skinny.

Nobody said a thing for 'most a minute. Then Benny stood up, bumped his head against the roof of the cave, and sat down again.

"Mighty chief," said he, when we were through laughing at him, "may I speak and live?"

He never had said that before and it surprised us.

"You may," said Skinny, looking fierce and swinging his club.

"Fellers," began Benny, "Skinny was a good enough leader when we went 'sploring out in Illinois last summer and I 'most got drowned in Fox River, and he was a good enough leader when we found a tramp in this 'ere cave and smoked him out. He lassoed the robber, that time, didn't he, when the guy was stealin' Hank's pearl, and—and—lots of things? I guess that anybody who could do that is good enough to be patrol leader."

That was a long speech for Benny to make, and we all patted him on the back except Bill, who sat

thinking and getting ready to say something. All of a sudden he spoke up.

"Fellers," said he, "three cheers for Skinny Miller, who is always there with the goods."

"You're out of order," Skinny told him, but nobody could hear.

I shouldn't wonder if they heard us voting clear down in the village.

We also had to have an assistant patrol leader, called a corporal, and we elected Bill Wilson. Bill is great at such things. As corporal he would be in command whenever Skinny was away. That didn't count for much, though, for Skinny is almost always around when anything is going on.

The next thing to do was to decide upon our patrol animal, like the book said.

At first we couldn't agree very well on that. Nearly every one wanted a different animal. Skinny wanted us to choose a snake because he liked the hissing part and a picture of a snake would be easy to draw on our signs.

Hank and Bill thought a dog would be best.

"A dog," said Bill, "is man's best friend, and that is what Scouts are for."

Hank could bark like a dog. That was why he wanted it.

Benny thought a crow would be the thing, but it seemed to me that the American eagle would be better. We heard one once on Greylock and it was great.

Skinny liked the eagle pretty well, especially the American part, but when he found that Benny Wade wanted a crow he said he was for a crow, too. That was because Benny had made the speech.

"A snake is all right for some things," he said, "and you don't want to step on them or on us. Don't you remember that old flag which had a rattlesnake on it and the words, 'Don't tread on me'? The hissing is all right, too, when we are close together and can hear, but how about it when we are not? What if I was hiding in Plunkett's woods and you were on the way to the cave and I should be attacked by Injuns or something. I might hiss until I was black in the face

and who'd hear me? You could hear me caw almost to Peck's Falls."

"Yes, that's so about snakes," I told them. "I don't think much of snakes myself. But I don't know about crows. The eagle is such a noble bird."

"Noble nothin'!" said he. "What did an eagle ever do that was noble any more than a crow? Besides a crow can talk if you split its tongue. I read it in a book. You can't draw an eagle. You'd have to write under it what it was."

"So you would under a crow," I told him.

"Anyhow," he went on, "I'll bet nobody here can make a noise like an eagle. Let's hear you do it, Pedro. Cawing is easy."

That ended the eagle business. Skinny was right. Not one of us could make a noise like an eagle.

"What makes you want it a crow, Benny?" asked Hank.

"I don't know how to tell it," said Benny, sort of bashful like. "I wasn't thinking about drawing it. A crow would be hard to draw, I guess,

but we could make something that looked like a bird and we boys would know what bird was meant. I wasn't thinking either whether it was noble or not. Maybe a crow ain't exactly noble, but somehow when I see a big fellow soaring around in the Bellows Pipe, between the mountains, it makes me feel kind of noble myself and as if I ought to soar, too. And when I hear the cawing of a crow, no matter where I am, even in North Adams or Pittsfield, I can see Bob's Hill and old Greylock and the Bellows Pipe, and big crows flying around in the air as if they owned them all. We are Bob's Hill boys and Greylock boys. That's why I want it a crow. They sort of belong together."

We never had thought of that before, but when we came to talk it over it seemed that way to us, too. So we chose the crow for our patrol animal, only we didn't call ourselves "the crows" but "the ravens," because it sounded so much nobler. While we can't draw a very good one when we make our signs, it looks some like a bird and we all know what kind it is, as Benny said.

By that time we were getting hungry and so

we made a bee-line for Plunkett's woods, sounding as if a whole flock of crows were starting south.

"Everybody scatter for wood," shouted Skinny, when we had come to the big stone where we build our fires. "I'll get the grub."

We ran to different parts of the woods where we knew there were dead branches lying on the ground, trying to see which would get a fire going first. Then, just as Bill and I met at the stone, with arms full of sticks, and the others close behind, we heard a terrible cawing over in the woods, only it didn't sound so much like a crow as it did like Skinny.

We looked at one another, wondering what it all meant, for the Scout business was new to us. Besides it sounded as if something had happened.

"'Tention, Scouts," said Bill, in a hurry to get in his work as corporal while Skinny was away. "Everybody caw!"

We made a great racket. In a moment there came an answering caw from the woods; then Skinny stepped out into the clearing in plain sight and motioned for us to come.

We knew something was the matter and started for the woods on a jump, the corporal in the lead.

"It's gone!" shouted Skinny, when we had come near. "Some guy has stolen our dinner."

"Great snakes!" groaned Bill. "And I'm starving to death."

We all gathered around the place where we had hidden the things under some bushes. Skinny was right; they were gone. I tell you he was mad.

"I don't know whether we are Scouts or bandits or Injuns," said he, "and I don't care, but I'd like to get hold of the critter that stole our dinner. We wouldn't do a thing to him. Oh, no. Maybe not."

"Everybody scatter," he shouted. "Look for signs and tracks. We'll follow him to the ends of the earth."

CHAPTER III

TRACKING THE ROBBERS

WE didn't have any idea who took our things and there didn't seem to be any way of finding out. The ground in the woods was carpeted with pine needles, which left no trace of footprints.

We thought that maybe those girls that we had chased had taken our dinner to get even, and it might have been the Summer Street boys, or maybe the Gingham Ground Gang.

We scattered, like Skinny told us, and gradually worked out from the center, crawling on our hands and knees, and watching every inch of the ground and the bushes.

We didn't get any trace at all until I found a potato. Then Skinny, who was a little ahead of me and at one side, gave a groan and yelled:

"Here's my wishbone. They've eaten all my fried chicken."

It always makes Skinny mad to have somebody eat his fried chicken.

Farther on we found pieces of eggshell and then more, as if somebody had peeled an egg while walking and thrown the shells on the ground.

We knew then that there was no chance of getting our dinners back, but we followed the trail, just the same.

After a time we came to the queerest looking tracks, where somebody had stepped on a soft piece of ground. Benny found them first.

"The spoor!" he yelled. "The spoor! I've found the spoor."

"Well, don't tell the whole town about it," said Skinny. "Keep quiet and we'll surround 'em."

"But the chicken and eggs are gone," he added, after a moment. "I was going to give you some of that chicken, Bill."

We stopped and had a long look at the tracks. There were four footprints and a hole, which looked as if it had been made with a stick, or cane. Three of the prints were like those which any man would make in walking and one was the print

of a bare foot, only it had a queer look that we couldn't understand.

"We've got 'em," whispered Skinny. "We'll know that footprint again anywhere we find it. Forward, and mum's the word!"

Twice after that we found the same queer footprint; once in the dust of a road that runs along the south side of Plunkett's woods, and again on the edge of a brook which comes down from the mountain somewhere.

Then we lost the trail and didn't know where to go. Just because we didn't know what else to do, we followed the brook up, until we came to a gully out of sight from the road.

Skinny was ahead, aiming with his stick and saying what he would do if he should catch the fellow that stole his chicken. All of a sudden we saw him drop behind a bush and lie still. We dropped, too. We didn't know what for, but I've noticed that it is 'most always a good thing to drop first and find out why afterward. Then we crawled slowly up to him to see what had happened.

There, sitting on the ground in a grassy ravine,

near the brook, were two men, and they were eating what remained of our lunch. One of them had his left shoe off and his foot done up in a bandage. That was what had made the track look so queer.

Now that we had caught them we didn't know what to do with them, for they were too big for us to tackle.

"I believe we could get away with the lame one," whispered Skinny, "only they have about eaten it all up; so what's the use? Besides, the other one looks as big as a house."

"If we only had a rope, Skinny," said Benny, "you could creep up behind and lasso them, the same as you did the robber out near Starved Rock."

"Bet your life I could," he replied, "but we haven't got one. Fellers, don't you ever go out again without a rope. You can't ever tell when you will need it."

"Great snakes!" said Bill, thinking of the chicken Skinny had been going to give him. "I'm starving to death. Let's heave some rocks at 'em, anyhow, and then run."

He picked up a big stone as he spoke and was going to throw it, when Hank caught his arm.

"Wait," said he. "I know a trick worth two of that. I'm going to shoot 'em."

"Shoot them?" I gasped in surprise. "What with?"

"With my camera. You fellows stay here out of sight and caw like a crow if they make any move before I am ready for them. If I can only get behind that clump of bushes back of them without their seeing me, I'll take their picture."

"Aw, cut it out," said Bill.

But Hank was gone, and after a little we could see him running through a field out of sight of the men, so as to come into the ravine from the other end. Pretty soon we saw him crawling in, creeping from bush to bush, in sight only for a second at a time.

There was not a sound except the voices of the men, who were talking about something, and the ground might have opened and swallowed Hank for all we could see of him.

We waited a long time and began to get nervous,

not knowing what had happened, and I saw Bill feeling around for another stone.

Then all of a sudden Hank stood up above the bushes he had told us about. He looked toward where he knew we were hiding and put one finger to his lips. Then he tossed a stone toward the men and dropped down out of sight again before it could fall.

"Great snakes!" whispered Bill. "If he's goin' to throw, why don't he do it, and not give a baby toss like that?"

Skinny held up one hand warningly as the pebble fell into the brook right back of the men, making a little splash and gurgle, as if a frog, or maybe a trout, had leaped out after a fly.

When they heard it both men jumped up and stood there in the sunshine, looking toward the sound. We couldn't see Hank, but knew that he was somewhere in the bushes taking their picture.

You almost could have heard our hearts beat for a minute, not knowing what would happen. Then the men sat down again and went on talking.

We waited five minutes to give Hank a chance

to get away, and crawled back the way we had come. When we reached the road we heard a crow cawing in the woods and knew that he was safe.

"You answer, Benny," said Skinny. "You do it best."

He gave three caws so real that I almost thought it was a sure enough crow. Hank joined us and we hurried down the road toward home, hoping that the dinner would not be all eaten up.

"Did you get the picture?" I asked.

He nodded. "I think so, but I can't be sure until it has been developed. I had a splendid chance. They stood just right and there was a fine opening through the bushes."

"It took you a long time," grumbled Bill. "I could have hit them with a rock easy."

"I was trying to hear what they were saying. I couldn't hear very well, but I think they are robbers or something."

"You bet they are robbers," said Skinny. "Didn't they steal my fried chicken?"

We didn't think much more about the men because we had important work on hand. The first

thing we had to do was to eat dinner. That is always important, especially when your mother knows how to cook beefsteak that makes you crazy just to smell. After that came a ball game. Our nine, the "Invincibles," played a picked nine from Summer Street. We beat, 25 to 19.

I didn't see any of the boys again until in church, Sunday morning. When I went in Bill Wilson was there, looking so dressed up that I hardly knew him.

He saw me and motioned for me to come into his pew, but Ma wouldn't let me do it. Bill had something on his mind. It was easy to tell that. He looked excited, and every time I turned around he went through with all sorts of motions with his mouth, trying to make me understand what he wanted to say.

It bothered me. Every time the minister twisted up his face, trying to make us understand how important it was what he was saying, I'd think of Bill's mouth going back of me. I couldn't help it.

When at last we went into Sunday school he told me.

"Great snakes, Pedro!" said he, grabbing me by one arm. "Haven't you heard about it?"

"How can I tell whether I have or not, when I don't know what it is?" I told him.

"They robbed Green's store last night; stole him blind."

"Who did?"

"The guys that we saw yesterday. Our robbers."

When Bill told me that you could have knocked me down with a feather. It made me almost as excited as he was. He didn't have time to say any more because teacher made him sit at the end of the line away from me so that he wouldn't whisper so much.

But after Sunday school was over he told me all about it. Burglars had broken into Green's store during the night. They blew open the safe and took all the money, nearly one hundred dollars, and they carried off a lot of knives and revolvers. There is an alley back of the store. They broke into the basement from there and then made their way upstairs.

"How do you know that it was our robbers who did it?" I asked.

Bill drew himself up and swelled out his chest, just like Skinny does sometimes.

"I'm a Boy Scout, ain't I?" he said. "A corporal, too."

"You are only a Tenderfoot," I told him.

That was true. You have to be a Tenderfoot before you can get to be a real Scout.

"It's the same thing," he said, winking one eye. "One of the robbers has a tender foot, anyhow."

"Look here, Bill," I told him. "You are getting to be worse than Skinny. What are you talking about?"

"Pedro," he said, "you'll never make a Scout. You're a good bandit and a good secretary, but this Scout business is too much for you. I saw their tracks; that's what."

"In the alley?"

He nodded. "Come on and I'll show you."

We hurried down to Center Street and turned into the alley back of the stores. The ground in

the alley was hard and didn't show any tracks except wagon ruts.

Bill looked up and down the alley to make sure that nobody was watching; then tiptoed over to one side, and lifted up a big piece of wrapping paper, which lay there as if it had been blown out of the store. Under the paper there was the same kind of footprint which we had followed from Plunkett's woods the day before.

There was no doubt about it. The man with a bandaged foot must have been in the alley back of the store which had been robbed.

Bill was the proudest fellow you ever saw over that footprint. When I had finished looking at it he put the paper back again and we went out into the street.

"What do you think of that?" said he. "I guess Skinny ain't the whole thing—on Sundays."

"Does the marshal know?"

"I haven't told a soul except you, Pedro. I am saving it for the Band—I mean the patrol. This is our chance. What's the good of bein' a Scout if you don't do any scoutin'?"

"Anyhow, I think we ought to tell the marshal about this," I said. "Those robbers are not going to wait for the Scouts to get busy. They probably jumped a freight last night and are in New York by this time. But maybe the marshal could do something."

Bill was bound to tell the other Scouts about it first. So after dinner we got the boys together and all went over and took a look at the footprint.

Skinny was even more excited than Bill was.

"We are hot on the trail, fellers," said he. "The thing to do is to surround them. We ought to have captured them yesterday. Bet your life we'll take a rope next time."

But when Pa found us talking it over on our woodpile, and we told him about it, he said for us to go to the marshal's at once, and if we didn't he would.

It being Sunday, we went to the marshal's house and found him sitting on the front porch dressed in his best clothes. He was some surprised when he saw the eight of us walk into his yard. It made us wish that we had uniforms on.

"To what do I owe the honor of this visit?" said he. "Is this a committee of distinguished citizens to ask me to run for mayor or something?"

Bill was bursting with the news, but Skinny was the first to speak.

"We want you to run for those burglars," he said, "and we can tell you who they are."

When he heard that the marshal began to get interested.

"Well, who were they? Maybe," he went on, smiling at us, "you youngsters have come to give yourselves up."

"We didn't do it," put in Bill. "We wouldn't do such a thing, but we know who did. We don't know his name, but we know his track. We could have caught him yesterday if we'd wanted to. I wish we had now."

Then we told him about losing our dinners and following the robbers through Plunkett's woods, and about the queer looking track made by the bandaged foot.

"I'd know that footprint in China," said Bill,

"and I found one just like it in the alley back of Green's store. The man with the lame foot made it. I 'most know he did."

"Say, William, you are a regular sleuth," said the marshal. "I have a notion to put you on the force."

But he didn't guy us any more after that. He put on his coat and walked downtown with us.

After he had looked at the footprint he covered it up again so that nobody would step on it.

"That's the one all right," Hank told him. "There were two of them. I heard them say something about robbing, when I was taking their pictures."

"Taking their pictures! They don't go around breaking into stores with an official photographer along, do they?"

"I don't know what they go around with," Hank said, "but I crept up close behind them and lay back of a bush where I could hear them talking, although I couldn't understand much of what they said. I thought it would be fun to take their pictures when they didn't know anything about it."

"They stood up when Hank threw a stone and looked right at the camera, only they didn't know it was there," Benny explained.

"Great Scott, boy! Do you mean to tell me that you took a photograph of the rascals?"

"I snapped them all right," Hank told him, "but I won't know whether I got a good picture or not until I develop the roll. I haven't done it yet."

"Well, you develop it right away, or, better still, get your camera and we'll have Marsh, the photographer, do it and make sure of things. He'll do it, if it is Sunday."

Hank hung back. "Can't you wait a while?" he asked. "I've got five shots left in the camera and don't want to waste them. They cost money."

The marshal looked disgusted. "Waste them! How much did they cost?"

"Twenty-five cents a roll; six in a roll."

The marshal pulled a quarter out of his pocket and handed it to him.

"You'll be a rich man some day," said he. "Now that roll of films belongs to me and that picture is going to be developed before you are an

hour older. Can you do the job or shall I look up Marsh?"

"I can do it all right, if there is any picture to develop."

"Very well, go ahead with it and bring it down to my office just as soon as you can. And I'll tell you further, young fellow, if we catch those burglars through your help, you'll get part of the reward."

Hank looked at us a moment with his eyes shining. Then he drew himself up.

"I'm a Scout," said he, "and Scouts are not looking for rewards. 'A Scout's duty is to be useful and to help others.' The book says so."

It made us all feel proud to have Hank say that. The marshal gave a surprised whistle.

"If that is the case," said he, laughing, "give me back my quarter."

But Hank wouldn't do that, although Skinny nudged him. I don't suppose you can learn to be a Scout all at once.

CHAPTER IV

"DANGER—COME"

IT was anxious work, standing around while Hank ran the film from his camera through some kind of machine which he had, to bring out the picture. After what seemed like a long time he took it out and looked through it toward the light.

"Hurrah!" he yelled. "We've got 'em."

We all crowded around to look, and sure enough at one end of the film we could see as plain as day two men standing up and looking toward us. And there was the brook, too, and the ravine, so real that we almost could hear the water pouring over the stones, which we think is the sweetest music in the whole world. Away back in the picture was the bush, behind which we boys were hiding when Hank took it. Only you couldn't see us at all, for we had been careful to keep out of sight.

It is wonderful, isn't it? I don't know how it is done and I don't believe that anybody else knows, but I know that it is so because I saw it with my own eyes.

Hank washed the film, and after it was dry put it in a frame with some paper which he had, and held it up to the gas jet. In a few seconds the picture showed up on the paper fine, just like our writing does when we do it in invisible ink and hold it up to a blaze.

We could tell who it was, all right. The big one had a scowl on his face, as if he had put it there when Hank tossed the stone and hadn't had time to smooth it out again.

"This picture is for the marshal," Hank told us. "Now I'll print another for the patrol. We'll let them soak and wash a while, and then dry them out. It'll take quite a long time, but we've got 'em all right."

When we finally went down to the marshal's it was evening. He was tickled when he saw the picture. It made Skinny feel real chesty and we all of us were proud.

"I tell you, Mr. Michael," said he, "the Band's the stuff. I mean the patrol is. They don't get away from us very often. I only wish we'd had a rope with us that time."

"You boys certainly did the trick," said the marshal, examining the picture. "I don't know those men myself, but I know where they will know them, and that is the next best thing. That is, if they are old crooks, as I suspect they are."

"Where's that?" asked Skinny.

"At police headquarters in New York. They have a rogues' gallery there that would surprise you. It contains the pictures and records of nearly every crook in the country. If these men are among them they'll pretty near know where to put their hands on them. I'll mail this down to-night. I've telegraphed already. Come around to-morrow and I'll tell you if I hear anything."

He met us with a broad grin the next afternoon and showed us a telegram. This is what it said, for I put it down. Skinny thought it ought to be in the minutes of the meeting.

"Men well-known crooks. Are under arrest. Got the goods and most of the money."

"More than ten words are in that telegram," said Hank, counting them.

"There you go again," laughed the marshal. "I'll have to call the New York chief down for being so careless. Anyhow, your robbers will go to the penitentiary as sure as preaching."

"I don't know about it," Benny told us afterward, when we were talking it over. "I'm 'most sorry that we did it. I shall always be thinking that if it hadn't been for us those men wouldn't be locked up away from birds and grass and trees. Maybe they didn't have such good folks as we've got. You know that guy out in Illinois didn't have."

But after we saw Pa we felt better about it.

"I'm glad you feel that way," said he. "Still you did the right thing after you found out about the robbery. I wouldn't advise you, however, to go around taking photographs of burglars. You might get into trouble another time. It surely is

an awful thing to be in state's prison, but being away from the trees and grass is not the worst thing about it. The worst thing is being so bad that you have to be locked up in order to make other people safe. It is a terrible thing to be a criminal, whether you are in prison or not."

He was quiet for a minute; then went on:

" I can't think of a worse prison for a human soul than a human body that does mean things, lies and steals or is vile in any way."

A few days later when Skinny and I went to the post-office together the postmaster handed him a letter.

" I say," said he, " you have been promoted, haven't you? "

On the envelope was written, " Captain Gabriel Miller, Patrol Leader, Raven Patrol, Boy Scouts of America."

It made us both excited.

" It's for the whole patrol," said Skinny, trying to look through it. " I don't think I ought to open it until we are all together, and I hardly can wait."

He rushed to the door as he spoke and whistled through his teeth, for he saw Bill and Hank passing on the other side of the street, going to my house.

"I could have cawed," he explained when they had come across, "but I didn't think that I ought to when folks were looking."

We went over to Benny's and found him piling wood and glad enough to quit.

"Never mind about the other boys," I told them. "They will be along pretty soon. Whatever it is, we'll want to read it twice, anyhow."

Skinny opened the letter and looked at the writing.

"Jee-rusalem, fellers!" he shouted. Then he commenced to caw like some crow that was crazy with the heat.

Bill cawed, too, but he didn't know what for. Then he tried to snatch the letter out of Skinny's hand.

"Aw, cut it out, can't you?" said he, when Skinny dodged out of the way. "Read it."

"I am readin' it," said Skinny. "It's great."

"Well, read it out loud."

Then Skinny started to read, and this is what the letter said, only it doesn't tell how Skinny's eyes shone, nor how he stopped every few lines to punch the enemy.

" To the Boy Scouts of Bob's Hill:

" I want to thank every boy in Raven Patrol, and especially Henry Bates, for the recovery of my property. But for you I should never have seen it again and the burglars would still be at large. I offered a reward for the capture of the thieves and it rightfully belongs to you, but the marshal has told me that, being Boy Scouts, you do not want to be rewarded for good deeds. What I wish to say is this: I like the Boy Scout idea and want to help it along. Not as a reward but just because I like boys, will you let me buy uniforms for your patrol?

" Sincerely your friend,

" Robert Green."

That is how we happen to have such fine uniforms that make folks turn around and look every time we pass.

On the day we first wore the uniforms we were made real Scouts; not First class ones but Second class. You see, there are three kinds. First you have to be a Tenderfoot. That doesn't mean that your feet are tender, but that you are new to the business. To get to be a Second Class Scout, you have to do all kinds of stunts and you have to be a Tenderfoot at least a month.

We knew how to build fires and cook things out in the woods and things like that, which Scouts have to do, and the way we tracked the burglars showed that we knew something about that.

The hardest things we had to do were to learn the Morse alphabet of dots and dashes for signaling and to learn what to do when folks get hurt, how to put on bandages and things like that and how to bring folks back to life when they are nearly drowned. We learned them all right, and it is a good thing we did.

Signaling was the most fun of all. We could do it with flags like they do in the army; by waving our arms like a semaphore, and by smoke from fires like the Indians do. We also could spell out

things with smoke in the Morse alphabet, which was something the Indians couldn't do, by making the smoke go up in puffs like dots and dashes.

Part of us would go up on Bob's Hill and part on the hill opposite, beyond the Basin where we go swimming, build fires, and signal to each other. It was hard at first, but after a while we could spell out 'most anything and understand some of it.

It came in handy, too, because one afternoon, after we had been playing in our yard, we decided to practise our signaling. Just after all the boys had started for the east hill, except Skinny and me, who were going up on Bob's Hill, Ma came out and wanted to know where the other boys were.

" It is too bad that they have gone," said she. " I was going to ask them to stay to supper."

" Maybe they'll come back," said Skinny, winking at me.

" We are not going to have much, but I thought you boys would enjoy eating together and we should like it, too. We do not often have the honor of sitting down to the table with young gentlemen who have uniforms on."

"We'll stay," said Skinny, "if you will let us do something to help. According to Scout law, a Scout must try his best to do somebody a good turn every day. I haven't done it now for 'most two days."

"If that is the case," Ma told him, "my woodbox seems to be getting empty."

That is the greatest woodbox I ever saw for getting empty. We filled it so full that the wood fell off all over the floor; then started for the hill.

"Now is our chance," said Skinny. "We've just got to make them understand this time. We never have had anything much to tell the boys before, but this is important."

We climbed to the very top of Bob's Hill and soon had a fire going. When it was well started we threw on some green stuff that made a big smoke. Pretty soon we saw smoke going up across the valley and knew that the other boys were ready.

"They are there," I said. "Now we'll tell them."

"Wait," said Skinny. "First let's give the danger signal. That'll fetch 'em."

"But there ain't any danger," I told him. "What's the use of lying, even with smoke?"

"You bet there's danger," said he. "There's danger of losing your mother's supper, ain't there?"

So I gave him one end of a wet blanket which I was carrying, and I grabbed hold of the other end. We covered the fire with it, stopping all of the smoke; then took it off and let a big puff go up; then covered it again and sent up a little puff, and kept doing that until I was sure the boys would be most crazy, for that sign means danger.

After we had done it a while, we spelled out the word "come." We did that by using the blanket to make a short puff of smoke for a dot and a long puff for a dash, like this:

... C .. O — M . E

We waited and spelled it out twice more to make sure, and then went down the hill to the house.

"Shall I set the table for the others?" Ma asked, when she saw us coming.

" They will be here in a few minutes," said Skinny, looking at his watch.

We were not sure of it, but we hoped they would and, as Skinny said, it wouldn't do any hurt to get the table ready.

We were beginning to be afraid that they had not understood and were not coming, when we heard a faint cawing, a long way off somewhere. It seemed from beyond Summer Street.

Skinny answered, while I ran into the house to tell the folks that it was all right. Then we went out in front and waited.

The first we saw of them was when Bill Wilson turned into Park Street in a cloud of dust and came tearing up the middle of the road on a jump. The other boys were close behind, running to beat the band, and every mother's son of them was carrying a big club.

They didn't even yell when they saw us, they were so nearly winded, but Bill, being corporal, ran up to Skinny, gave the Scout salute, and then whirled his club around his head three times.

It was great to see them come up that way, every

Scout whirling his club and all out of breath. Skinny's eyes shone like stars, he was so proud, and I saw Ma looking out of a window, surprised some, I guess.

" Show 'em to us!" yelled Bill, as soon as he could speak. " We'll eat 'em up."

" You'll get all the eating you want in about five minutes," Skinny told him.

" Where are they?" yelled Bill again, while the other boys marched up and stood in a row, each with his club in the air.

" You are crazy," said Skinny. " Where's who?"

" The Gingham Ground Gang. Didn't you tell us the Gang was after you and for us to come quick?"

" Not much. I said supper was ready and that if you didn't get a move on yourselves you would lose out."

" Ain't there going to be a fight?"

Just then Ma came out and it was a good thing she did, because there might have been a fight, after all.

"Boys," said she, smiling at us, "you are all invited to stay to supper, and you will just about have time to wash up and cool off a little. We are having supper early to-night. I was so disappointed when I found out that you had gone that your patrol leader, Captain Miller, told me that he would signal to you and that Corporal Wilson would get you here on time if he had to run his legs off. I don't exactly see how he did it but you are here, that is certain. I've let your folks know, so you can stay just as well as not, unless you don't like my cooking."

When she said that the boys set up a shout, for they knew all about Ma's cooking.

"I wish you would tell me how you do it," she added, turning back as she was going into the house. "If your secretary would come like that when I call him, I should be the proudest woman in the village."

CHAPTER V

A CAMPFIRE ON BOB'S HILL

"JEE-RUSALEM, fellers," said Skinny a few days later, "we're going to have a campfire to-night on Bob's Hill. Mr. Norton, the Scoutmaster, is going to be there, and he says for us not to eat too much supper because there will be something doing along about eight o'clock. It will beat the Fourth of July."

We hardly could wait for evening to come. The folks thought that I must be sick because I didn't want much supper, until I told them about the campfire.

"You'd better eat a bowl of bread and milk, anyhow," said Ma. "If I know anything about boys, and I have seen a few in my day, you will be ready for another meal by eight o'clock."

I don't know how it is, but things always seem to happen just as Ma says they will. Long before

eight o'clock came we were waiting for Mr. Norton at our house, as hungry as bears.

After a while he came along, lugging a big basket and wearing a smile that would have made us warm to him if we never had before.

"Captain," said he to Skinny, "if you will detail two of your men to bring some water, we'll get started. Of course, if we were going to make a regular camp we should see that there was water near. We'll have to carry it this time, but it isn't far to the top of the hill. One of you might help me with this basket; there seems to be something in it."

Fifteen minutes later we were all at the top of the hill and had brought some sticks from Plunkett's woods for a fire and a curl of birch bark to kindle it with.

"I understand that you boys came near burning up the woods and village once with a fire up here," said Mr. Norton. "We must be careful about that. Fire is a good servant but a very hard master. We do not need a big blaze for a campfire, so hot that we cannot sit around it. All we need

is just enough to look cheerful, to heat our coffee, and furnish enough hot coals for cooking this beefsteak."

He was unpacking the basket while he talked, and Skinny was lighting the fire.

"I don't know that I can tell you anything about making fires and cooking. You boys just about live out of doors in summer, so far as I have observed. You are in great luck to have your homes in a small village. If you should play some of your pranks in a city, I am afraid that you might become unpopular and the police might get after you. Boys in great cities, like Chicago or New York, know little of the freedom and sweetness of country life."

He went over to a little clump of trees and came back with a small branch, from which he stripped the leaves and twigs. When he had finished he had what he called a "pot hanger" of green wood, about four feet long and with a kind of crotch at the smaller end. He put the big end under a stone, the right distance from the fire, and drove a short, crotched stick into the ground to

hold the pot hanger over the blaze at the right angle. When that was done all we had to do was to hang a pail of water on the end of the pot hanger and wait for the water to boil.

"I thought that we wouldn't bother with potatoes this time," said he, "although they make good eating when baked in hot ashes, as you boys probably know. Mrs. Norton put in a whole stack of bread and butter sandwiches and some other things, which we must get rid of somehow, and Mrs. Smith gave me this bag as we were leaving the house. I don't know what is in it, and she told me not to open it until the feast was ready."

We all kept our eyes on the bag and wondered what was in it. I thought that I could make a good guess, being better acquainted with Ma than the other boys were, but I couldn't be sure.

By the time the water was boiling the fire had burned down to red-hot coals. Mr. Norton poured the water over the coffee and set the pot in a hot place. Then he began to get busy with the meat, using a broiler which he had brought in the basket. The delicious smell of the beefsteak and the coffee

almost drove us crazy, and we began to be afraid that it would bring the whole village up the hill to us.

It seems as if every meal that we eat out of doors that way is better than any which we ever have had before. It grew dark before we had finished Ma's doughnuts, which we found on opening the bag. As we sat there we could see lights begin to glow all up and down the valley and back of us from an occasional farmhouse, up toward Greylock. Stars came out overhead, and after a little we saw a light in the sky above the East mountain and knew that in a few minutes the moon would come up.

After we had eaten all that we wanted, we threw some wood on the coals to make a little blaze, and then lay around and talked.

Finally Benny said, "I wish you would tell us a story, Mr. Norton, like Mr. Baxter did out in Illinois last summer."

"I am going to tell you a whole lot of stories before we get through with our meetings," he replied, "but let us discuss this Scout business a little

more first. When you took the Scout's oath and were enrolled in the Tenderfoot class, you pledged your word of honor that you would do your duty to God and your country, that you would help other people at all times, and that you would obey the Scout law. That Scout law is important. Suppose we talk it over. Gabriel, you are leader, can you tell us what the first law is?"

Skinny stood up and folded his arms.

"A Scout is trustworthy," said he.

"It is a great thing to be trustworthy; to be dependable," said Mr. Norton. "In a few years, you boys and others like you will be running this country and the other countries which make up what we call the civilized world. To you doubtless that time seems far off. Let me tell you that it will be here almost before you know it. It seems only yesterday when I myself was a youngster like you."

"I'm going on twelve," Benny told him, "and I have begun to grow again."

"The Band is dependable all right," said Skinny, stabbing around in the air with his fork. "I mean the patrol is. Bet your life, when they monkey

with the Band they run up against a buzz saw."

Bill didn't say a word, but he cawed three times; then flapped his arms and crowed, and ended by standing on his hands and kicking his feet in the air. Bill didn't have to talk. He could do things that made us know what he meant, without saying a word.

"To be dependable," went on Mr. Norton, "means more than to fight for your rights, or for your country's rights. It means that in all walks of life you must be ready to 'deliver the goods.' When a Scout gives his word of honor that settles it. That which he says is true, is true; you can depend upon it, and he will do exactly what he says he will do. That is a quality which we greatly need in men as well as in boys, who soon will be men."

"Corporal, what is the second law?"

Bill thought a minute and then said:

"A Scout is loyal."

"Right you are. You must be loyal to your country, to your parents, to your officers, to your

employers, when you get to work. Loyalty is a great thing. It means to stick together. One boy, or one man, alone, cannot accomplish much. Several working loyally together for a single object, are a power. You and the Gingham Ground Gang used to have considerable trouble, didn't you?"

"We do now," we told him, "except with Jim Donavan. Jim is square and we'd like to have him join us, but he won't leave the Gang; says it wouldn't be right."

"That is the kind of boy we want for a Scout. He is loyal and his honor is to be trusted. You must help me to organize the Gang, as you call them, into another patrol. But what I was going to say is this: When you and the Gang were enemies, which I hope you never will be again, what would have happened if one of you had ventured alone down near the gingham mills?"

"They would have done him up."

"Exactly. Now suppose the eight of you had stood together, back to back, shoulder to shoulder, working against a common enemy?"

"We did once," said Benny, and they licked us,

anyhow, but there were more of them than there were of us."

"Bet your life they didn't lick us very bad," put in Skinny. "It was a snowball fight. They drove us from their hill, but afterward they asked us to come back and slide with them, and we did. We had a fine time."

"It seems to me that in that case both sides won a victory. The greatest victory a boy or man can win is one over himself, over his own passions, his selfishness and meanness. The greatest enemy that he or his country can have will be found right inside his own heart. There is where we all have a fight on hand continually. But, remember, you are Scouts and a Scout's honor is to be trusted."

"Benny, what is the next law?"

"A Scout is helpful."

"There you have it. The highest type of man is the useful one. There was once an old philosopher who said that he counted that day lost in which he did no good deed. A Scout ought to feel the same way. You must try to do something for somebody every day."

"They don't have giants and dragons, any more," said Skinny. "I wish they did; we'd paralyze 'em."

"Henry, what is the next one?"

"I am not quite sure whether it comes next or not, but I think it does. The law says, 'A Scout is a friend to all and a brother to every other Scout.' Does that mean that we must be brothers to the Gingham Ground Gang when they get to be Scouts?"

"Surely it does. Why not? Your folks may have a little more money than their folks and not so much as some one else. What of it? There is something better than money, and that something is manhood. Don't be snobs, whatever you are."

"Now, Mr. Secretary, it is your turn."

"A Scout is courteous," I told him.

"Politeness is a great thing. If he lives up to his pledge, a Scout will be courteous, especially in his treatment of women and children who are younger than he is, and of old people and those who are feeble or handicapped in some way by being crippled or sick. Don't forget that old men

started as boys and that you boys, if you live, will become old men. Now for number six."

"A Scout is kind and a friend to animals," Harry said.

"And the next?"

"A Scout is obedient," said Chuck.

"Now we are getting down to business. The first duty of a soldier is to obey, and it is so important that he should obey in time of war that a soldier, or scout, who refused to obey orders would be shot. You are supposed to obey orders without question. Obey your parents especially. Obey me as Scoutmaster. Obey your patrol leader; that is your duty as Scouts. If the order does not suit you, do your kicking afterward, not before. First deliver the goods; then you will be in a position to criticise, if necessary."

"We haven't heard from you, Wallie. Let's have number eight."

"A Scout is cheerful."

"That's the idea. Don't grumble or whine. That will never get you anywhere, or the world anywhere.

"I want to say a few words about the next law, 'A Scout is thrifty.' Thrift is of the greatest importance. Save your money. Save your pennies. Put them in the bank. I think they ought to teach thrift and the importance of saving in the public schools. It does not mean that you should be stingy. When you boys worked hard one winter and gave a purse of money to an unfortunate stranger, you were living up to the highest ideals of a Scout. It doesn't mean that money is the most important thing in the world, for it is far from it. But remember this: a man's first duty to his country is to be self-supporting, and to be self-supporting in his old age he must be thrifty in his youth. He must make hay while the sun shines. He must learn to save his money. That is why a Tenderfoot must have one dollar in the bank before he can become a Second Class Scout, and a Second Class Scout must have two dollars before he becomes a First Class Scout. The habit of thrift is very important. When you grow older and go to work, no matter what you earn, I want you to save a part of it.

"There are three more laws," he went on, after a minute, "and they speak for themselves: 'A Scout is brave,' 'A Scout is clean,' 'A Scout is reverent.' I need not tell you to be brave in the presence of danger. Do you understand that sometimes it takes greater courage to stand up for the right? Keep yourselves clean; not only your bodies but your thought and speech. And be reverent, boys, toward God, who made old Greylock and these beautiful hills for you to enjoy."

When he had finished Skinny started to throw some wood on the fire, but Mr. Norton stopped him.

"Never go away," he said, "leaving a fire where it possibly can do any damage. We'll be going home in a few minutes, and before we go this fire must be put out. If the wind should come up in the night the flames might spread into Plunkett's woods."

We saw in a minute that he was right, and, taking sticks, beat out what little fire there was; then started down the hill.

"I'll tell you what I have been thinking," said

Mr. Norton, when we were going through Blackinton's orchard. "We have had so much fun tonight that I should like to go camping with you boys for a week, some time this summer. These mountains and woods are just the places for scouting and we could have a campfire every night. What do you say?"

"We say yes," said Skinny, "if our folks will let us, and I know they will."

"Can we play Indian, Mr. Norton?" asked Benny.

"We certainly can. I think everybody likes to get out into the woods and be an Indian once a year. You boys have something to do first, however. I want every one of you to be able to show a First Class Scout badge."

"We can do most of the stunts now," I told him, "only we haven't been seven miles and back."

The book says that before becoming a First Class Scout a boy must go on foot to a point seven miles away and return again, and afterward to write a short account of the trip. It says, too, that it

would be better to go one day and come back the next, and that means to camp out all night.

That last was a hard thing to do because our mothers did not want us to go off that way alone. Mothers always seem to think a boy is going to get hurt or something. Mr. Norton finally talked them into it, all except Benny's mother. She wouldn't stand for it. Benny cried, he felt so badly about it.

"Do it in one day, then," Mr. Norton told him. "Remember that the law says for you to obey your parents without question. That is more important than to do the stunt."

CHAPTER VI

A FOURTEEN-MILE HIKE

SCHOOL let out Thursday, June 22, and it had seemed to us as if the day never would come. Not that we don't like school because we do—sometimes; but when the sap drips from the maples and bees buzz around the pussywillows on the river bank and all the trees take on a different look, as if there was going to be something doing right away, then the time has come for us to get out our marbles and tops and to fix up the cave for the summer.

Pretty soon the buds begin to throw off their overcoats, and Bob's Hill grows green again in the warm sunshine; the woods are bright with wild flowers, and the songs of birds and smell of spring fill the air.

Then the mountains and hills tease us away from our books, when we look out of the window. The

river, all swelled up with joy and melting snows, shouts for us to come on, every time we cross the bridge. On Saturdays the brook at Peck's Falls, grown big and noisy, roars out a welcome and tries to say how glad it is to have us back at the cave again.

Say, how can a boy sit quiet in school when all those things are going on?

Last day finally came. It always does, no matter how slowly the time seems to pass. The very next morning the Ravens met to do the final stunts that would make us First Class Scouts.

For more than a week we had thought of little except the fourteen-mile hike. It took several meetings before we could decide where to go. Our first idea was to tramp up into the mountains somewhere, but that scared our folks and we had to give it up.

"It isn't as if you were all going together," said Pa. "In that case, if one should get hurt the others could take care of him and go for help. If one of you alone should break your leg on the mountain we might never be able to find you. I

think you'd better stick to civilization and the beaten paths. You are not mollie-coddles and probably would come out all right, anyhow. At the same time, I should sleep better nights if I knew that my boy wasn't off on the mountain somewhere, alone."

That left us only two directions to go, north and south, because on the east and west there are mountains and the valley between is narrow. South near Cheshire Harbor it narrows down so much that there is room only for a wagon road, the river, and the railroad, side by side, but there is another road part way up the hill on the east.

On that account we decided that all should not go on the hike the same day, but to go four at a time, each taking a different road. There are two roads leading north to North Adams, one on each side of the river, and two leading south. One goes through Maple Grove and Cheshire Harbor to Cheshire, where a lot of swell folks from New York spend their summer vacations. The other, as I have said, is part way up the east hill and goes through a place, called Pumpkin Hook. It's a queer name but we didn't name it.

The plan that we finally decided on was for each to follow one road one day for seven miles; then go up into the hills somewhere to make camp for the night, and the next day to go back again by the other road. In that way we should stand a chance of meeting two Scouts some time during the trip, one on the morning of the second day, when we would be crossing over to take the other road, and one when the first boys on their way home would pass the second boys on the way out.

We drew cuts to see who should be the first four to go. Skinny, Harry, Wallie, and Bill won the first chance. They were to start the next morning at seven o'clock sharp from the bridge, two going north and two south. Hank, Benny, Chuck, and myself were to wait until seven o'clock, the second day, and then start. When we all had come back, we planned to meet Mr. Norton and tell him about where we had been and what we had seen and done.

Benny and I live nearest to the bridge. My house is only a stone's throw north of it; Benny's is a little north of mine and on the other side of

Park Street. That made it easy for us to get to the bridge first, but pretty soon the others began to come.

"Has anybody seen Skinny?" I asked, looking at Mr. Norton.

Skinny's house is near Mr. Norton's, and we had thought that maybe they would come together.

"I stopped in as I passed," said he. "Mrs. Miller told me that he had started."

Just then we heard a caw, sounding from over toward Plunkett's woods somewhere. It didn't take us long to answer. Then we watched down the railroad track, where it curves into town between the wooded hillside and the river.

We didn't have long to wait. In a few minutes we saw Skinny put his head out between the trees which line a high bank, fifteen or twenty feet above the track. He looked carefully in every direction; waved one arm, when he saw that we were watching, and then dodged back again out of sight.

"He's surrounding something," said Bill, giving a caw so loud it must have almost scared the crows up in the Bellows Pipe.

"There are only four minutes left before leaving time."

Mr. Norton was looking at his watch. He had hardly spoken, when, with a whoop and yell, Skinny slid down the embankment and was running like mad up the track toward us, waving his hatchet in one hand and swinging a rope around his head with the other.

"One minute to spare," said Mr. Norton, smiling as he put his watch back into his pocket. "That's the way to do it. Be prompt. If you say that you'll be somewhere at a certain time, be there."

"Say, Skinny," said Bill, winking at me and giving the Scout salute, "did you get 'em surrounded?"

Skinny wouldn't answer, or even look at him except to return the salute. He pulled out his own watch, held it a moment; then pounded on the bridge with his hatchet.

"The meetin' will come to order?" said he.

As he spoke, the bell on the woolen mill began to ring and we knew that it was seven o'clock and time to start.

Quite a little crowd had gathered by that time and there was a cheer when the boys started, Skinny and Harry marching south on Center Street, side by side, and Bill and Wallie, north on Park Street.

Pretty soon their ways branched off. They turned and waved to us; then were gone. Once after that we heard some crows cawing in the distance, and a little later I heard Bill yell from somewhere down the river. I knew that he was doing his best, but I hardly could hear him.

It wasn't easy to wait until the next day, with the other boys gone and knowing that we should have to do it, too, in the morning.

Pa said that maybe the time would pass more quickly if I'd hoe in the garden a spell, but it didn't seem to make any difference. My mind was following the boys, especially Skinny, on his long walk over a hilly road to Pumpkin Hook.

"Scout's law says that we must be useful and help others," he had told us, "and, bet your life, I am going to do things."

"Maybe," said he, after a minute, "I can rescue some fair damsel in distress, like the knights used

to do, even if there ain't any dragons now-a-days. The road goes too far from the river for me to save anybody from drowning; unless I come back by the river road."

In the evening Benny and I sat out on the woodpile, talking about it. We wondered where the boys were making their camps, if anything would happen to them and if Skinny had rescued anybody yet.

That night I dreamed that I was on the way. I met a little, old woman, going to market, and carried her basket for her.

"Noble boy," said she. "Because of your kind act I'll change shoes with you. Mine hurt my feet."

I didn't like to do it very well because her shoes were old and shabby, but Scout law says to be courteous. So I thanked her as well as I could and put them on.

And, say, they were magic shoes. I got to North Adams in about three jumps and liked it so well that I went on to Boston. I was just going to sleep on Boston Common when a big

policeman grabbed me by one shoulder and gave me a shake.

"Quit!" I said. "A Scout's honor is to be trusted."

"John! John!" came a voice. "It's time to be up and away."

I opened my eyes and there was Pa, laughing down at me.

"You're a pretty Scout," said he. "It's after six o'clock and you have to start at seven."

Ma hated to see me go, knowing that I'd be out all night, but Pa didn't care, or pretended that he didn't.

"He's all right," he said. "What's going to hurt him, I'd like to know?"

Before seven o'clock the four of us were at the bridge and, say, we looked fine in our uniforms. Each one carried a little pan to cook in, some bacon and other things to eat, and a blanket strapped on his back. We also carried "first aid to injured" things, to be ready if we should find somebody getting hurt.

When the bells rang for seven o'clock we started.

This time it was Benny and I who went north on Park Street, and Hank and Chuck, south.

"You watch my smoke," whispered Hank to me, when we were ready to start. "I've got a new invention and I'm going to try it on somebody."

When we were passing Benny's house Mrs. Wade came out and waved to us.

"Benny Wade," she shouted, "if you are not home by nine o'clock to-night, your mother will have a fit."

I knew from the look on Benny's face how hard it was for him to be cheerful, when he wanted to stay out all night, like the rest of us.

"All right, Ma," said he. "Don't worry. I'll come back, if I live."

"If you live!" I heard her yell; but Benny was turning the corner to take the east road and in another second was out of sight.

At first I hardly could believe that I really was on the way. I took Mr. Norton's message out of my pocket and looked at it, to make sure, several times. He had given each of us a message to some one at the end of the line and told us to bring back

a receipt or an answer. Mine was to a man in North Adams.

The Bob's Hill boys are used to walking. That didn't bother me any. But somehow this was different from any other walk that I ever had taken. I suppose it was because it was so important and because I was all alone.

I walked along at pretty good speed until I had almost reached the Gingham Grounds. Then I slowed down and kept my eyes open for the Gang, hoping that I should see Jim Donavan somewhere. Jim was their captain and one of our best friends, but some of the others had it in for us.

I had begun to think that I was going to get through all right, without any trouble, when I saw one of them coming toward me. He was one of the best fighters in the Gang, too, and he had a dog with him. Jim was nowhere in sight.

Isn't it queer what things will come into your head when you are scared? Pa says that I can't remember twenty-five cents' worth of groceries from our house to the store; but that is something else.

I was scared, all right, and wanted to run, because fighting always is scary until after you get started. Then, all of a sudden, I thought of something that Pa had once read to me about General Grant. Grant was marching up a hill once, expecting to find the enemy on the other side and wanting to run all the time, only he was too proud. Then when he reached the top, where he could see down into the enemy's camp, he found that they had been more scared than he was and not so proud, for they had run away.

"So," said he, or something like it, "no matter how frightened you are, or how much you want to run, remember that the other fellow probably is just as badly scared as you are."

When I thought of that I braced up and walked along fast, pretending that I was in a hurry and didn't see him, but keeping one eye on him, just the same, and the other on a stone which lay in the road, near where the dog stood whining. The boy was patting his head and trying to coax him along.

He pretended that he didn't see me, too, until I was passing. Then he spoke.

"Hello, you village guy," said he.

"Hello, yourself," I said, stopping and edging toward the stone.

"Where do you think you are going?"

"North Adams."

"What for?"

"Oh, just for fun."

"Huh!" said he. "Ain't the trains runnin'?"

"I've got something that's better than trains. It's legs."

"What's the uniform for?"

"Anything the matter?" I asked, after I had told him that I was a Boy Scout, for I could see that he was feeling badly about something.

"It's my dog," he told me, rubbing his sleeve across his eyes. "Somebody broke his leg with a stone and I've got to kill him. He's all I have."

"A Scout should be kind to animals," I said to myself. "A Scout is a friend to all." "A Scout should be useful."

Then I answered myself back.

"What's the use? This ain't any damsel-in-distress business, like Skinny is going to do. Besides, if I hurry maybe I'll get a chance to signal to Benny from the turn in the road on ahead."

"Come on and help me kill him," said he.

Just then the dog gave such a pitiful whine that I couldn't stand it, Benny or no Benny. So I took out my bandage.

"I think I can fix his leg, if you'll help me," I told him. "Get me a couple of sticks."

I told him what I wanted, and when he had brought them and I had whittled them into shape to use as splints, I fitted the broken bones in place and bandaged the leg, just as Mr. Norton had taught us, while the boy held the dog. The dog yelped a little, but seemed to know that I was doing it to help him.

"It will soon grow together," I said, when I had finished, "and then it will be almost as good as new."

It made me feel kind of queer and happy to see how glad he was. The dog licked my hand, too,

and seemed to be trying to say something. I wish dogs could talk.

"How did you come to know so much?" he asked. "Is your father a doctor?"

Then I told him all about the Scouts and our hike and what Mr. Norton had said about wanting the Gang to join.

"Bully!" said he. "We'll do it. The others went up on the mountain this morning after berries. I'd have gone, too, only for the dog. But I'll tell them when they get home to-night."

"Say," I called out, after I had started on. "You know Benny Wade, don't you?"

"The kid what always goes around with youse?"

I nodded.

"Yes, I know him when I see him. Why?"

"He'll come through here this evening some time, on his way back from North Adams. Let him look at the dog and see if he is all right. He knows as much about those things as I do. Bill Wilson ought to be along some time during the day on his way back. He started yesterday. Say, you ought to see Bill do up a leg."

Nothing happened after that, although I kept close watch of the river, hoping that I might find somebody drowning. Some boys were in swimming at one place, but they were not drowning nor anywhere near it.

I could have reached North Adams easily long before noon, if I had wanted to, but I had all day to do it in, so loafed along, expecting to meet Bill every minute. I rested in the shade whenever I felt like it. But although I did a lot of cawing every few minutes and kept a sharp look-out, I didn't see Bill, and I didn't hear him, which I couldn't understand, unless he had taken the east road home to keep away from the Gingham Grounds.

At noon I went down by the river, cut a pole, and fished a little, although I didn't catch anything. I didn't build a fire and cook because I had a good lunch in my pack. It seemed sort of lonesome, being there so far away and knowing I couldn't go home when night came.

After a long rest I walked on until I came to a bridge, and then, feeling sure Benny must be in

North Adams by that time, I crossed over to the east road, where I knew some folks, and went up into the hills to where Hoosac Tunnel begins. It was fun to see the trains dart in and out of that great hole which reaches four miles through the mountain, and I sat there a long time watching.

Four o'clock came before I found my man in North Adams and delivered the message. By that time I was tired enough to go into camp for the night. He smiled when he saw me coming in my Scout uniform.

"This letter," said he, when he had read it, "says for me to buy you a life size ice cream soda? Do you want it?"

There isn't anything in Scout law, is there, which says a Scout mustn't eat ice cream soda? And the tireder and hotter you are the better it tastes, doesn't it? I guess yes. Only I wished that Benny was there, eating one with me.

That night I camped on the bank of a brook, part way up the mountain and a mile or more beyond the city. The water was clear as crystal and seemed kind of company, for it gurgled as it

poured over the stones, making music that was great.

I hardly could wait to build a fire and fry my bacon, I was so hungry. But what is the use of carrying bacon and a pan seven miles, unless you fry the stuff after you get there? I tell you it tasted good and so did the wild strawberries that I picked afterward for dessert.

But when it began to grow dark and lights shone out down in the city and in the sky above, and queer sounds came from the mountain and woods back of me, I'd have given fifteen cents to have been at home, or at any rate, to have had somebody with me.

After a while I heard a voice say:

"A Scout should smile and look pleasant."

"Who—who—is that talking?" I asked.

"It's your friend, the brook," came back the answer, in a sweet, gurgly voice. "I'm a Scout, too. Hear me sing."

"So am I," came the deep voice of the mountain back of me. "A Scout should be brave. Sleep, my brother. I'll watch over you."

"So are we Scouts," came in whisperings from every side, through the darkness, and I knew that the trees were talking to me. "We'll take care of you."

Then I grew brave all in a minute and started up to go to them. As I did so, the darkness fled, leaving me there lying on the ground in broad daylight, while the brook sang its loudest and all the trees waved good-morning. Would you believe it? I had slept all night long and dreamed that about the brook and the mountain.

On the way home, I came in sight of the houses of the village before ten o'clock, tired but happy because I had done the last test and now could be a First Class Scout.

Benny met me outside the village, and he looked scared when he saw that I was alone.

"Have you seen Bill Wilson?" he shouted, as soon as he could make me hear.

"I missed him somewhere," I called. "He must have come back by the east road. Why? What's the matter?"

He already was hurrying home so fast that I

hardly could catch up with him. As he ran he shouted back over his shoulder something that set my heart to beating and made me forget how tired I was.

"Bill hasn't come back."

CHAPTER VII

"BILL HASN'T COME BACK"

ALL it meant to say that Bill hadn't come back did not come over me until I found myself hurrying after Benny down Park Street. Bill had left home on the morning of the second day before, intending to camp out one night and come back the next day. Two nights had passed and he was still away. What had become of him?

I hurried along faster and faster, thinking of all the things that might have happened. Mr. Norton and Bill's folks reached the house almost as soon as I did. I don't know how they found out that I had come back.

Bill's folks were nearly crazy about him. The first night out, they expected him to be away, of course, and so did not worry much. When dinner time came the next day and he hadn't showed up, they began to wonder what was keeping him, for the

other boys who had started at the same time were home.

When night came again and he still was away, they began to grow very anxious and sent for Mr. Norton.

"I can't understand it," said he. "I supposed that he had come home long ago, and have been too busy to find out. The other three are back, I understand."

"Yes, they came back in time for dinner."

"I am surprised that William is still out, but do not feel alarmed, Mrs. Wilson. Something has detained him, but it cannot be anything serious. Both roads to North Adams are well traveled and the farmhouses are near together. As likely as not he stopped to help somebody out of a difficulty and it has taken longer than he expected. One of our laws, you know, says that a Scout's duty is to be useful and to do somebody a good turn every day. I'll run over and talk with Wallace. They started together and may have met when they crossed over from one road to the other.

Mr. Norton was more anxious than he pretended.

Wallie said that he hadn't seen him and hadn't heard him, which was worse, for Bill usually could be heard a long way off. Wallie said that he had called to him every few rods when crossing over to the west road beyond North Adams but hadn't heard a thing. It would have been easy for them to miss each other, unless they happened to take the same crossroad.

"I might get track of him in North Adams," said Mr. Norton, after a little. "You see, I gave him a message to deliver to a friend of mine there. He surely will know something about him, but he hasn't a telephone and I think is out of town to-day, anyhow. Maybe I'd better drive up. The boy probably will get back before I do, but it will make me feel better to be doing something."

By that time everybody was getting scared. I mean all our folks were. Mrs. Wade was sure that Benny never would come home again, although it wasn't quite nine o'clock, the time when he said he would come.

Mrs. Wade is all right most of the time, only she can think of more trouble for Benny to get

into than he could find in a week, if he looked for it. Mothers are often that way. I guess it is because they like us so well.

"He said he would come back, if he lived. Those were his last words. And he hasn't come."

She told that to Ma, over and over again.

"He'll come back all right," said Ma, "and so will John, when the time comes."

But she was worried about me, just the same, all on account of Bill. Of course, I didn't know about it at the time. I found out afterward.

No one ever made better time driving the six miles to North Adams than Mr. Norton did that night. Just outside the village he met Benny, coming on a run, and stopped long enough to ask him if he had seen Bill.

"No," said he. "I missed him. The Gang held me up at the Gingham Ground and almost made me late. I told Ma that I would be home by nine o'clock if I lived. I'm 'most dead, but guess I can hold out until I get there. She'll be

having a fit pretty soon if I don't hurry. What time is it, anyhow?"

Mr. Norton whipped up his horse before Benny finished.

"William hasn't come back!" he shouted over his shoulder, just as Benny called to me in almost the same place. Then he tore down the road toward the Gingham Ground.

It was after midnight when he came back. There was a light burning in our house and he stopped.

"He has not been there!" was all that he could say, when Pa met him at the door.

"Hasn't been there!"

"No, I found Jenks, to whom I had sent the message, and he said that he had seen nothing of him, although he had been expecting him. You see, I told him that the boy was coming. The message has not been delivered."

"Mr. Smith," he went on, after a moment, "I can't face Mrs. Wilson with that news. You go to her, while I get the marshal started and see if something cannot be done. I tell you something

has happened. I am convinced of that. Young Wilson would have delivered that message if he possibly could have reached the place, and it would have taken a great deal to stop him. There isn't a yellow streak in that boy anywhere."

"Did you make any inquiries?"

"Yes, I stopped at every house along the road where there was a light burning. Not a person had seen him, although several had seen your boy on the way out. At North Adams I notified the police, but I don't know what they can do."

"I'll go to Mrs. Wilson right away," Pa told him. "This certainly is bad business, but we can't do much until morning. As soon as it is daylight we'll send out a search party. There are only two roads, unless he went up through the Notch, which is not at all probable. It ought not to be a difficult matter to get some trace of him."

"I'll tell you where he is," he went on, after thinking a minute. "He met my John and went back to camp all night with him. They will come home together to-morrow; you see if they don't. John is a pretty safe boy. He's full of pranks,

like the others, but he is more cautious. He'll come home all right and bring Bill with him."

Mr. Norton shook his head.

"I sincerely hope so," he said, "but it is not at all probable. Mr. Smith, I never will forgive myself if anything has happened to that boy."

"You are not to blame at all," Pa told him. "Depend upon it, if anything has happened, and we don't know that there has, the boy himself is to blame. He is a fine lad, but is a little reckless and thoughtless at times. Cheer up. It might be a lot worse. Now, if the boys had gone up into the mountains as they talked of doing at first, there would be real cause for worry."

That was why Benny waited for me outside the village the next day, and why Mr. Norton and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson met me at the house and why Skinny and the other boys came in a few minutes afterward.

Mrs. Wilson knew by my face that I had not seen anything of Bill and burst out crying.

"There couldn't have anything happened to him, Mrs. Wilson," I told her, sort of choking up

in my throat, myself, because she was feeling so bad. "I mean anything much. Maybe a tramp locked him up somewhere when he was asleep, or some gipsies stole him. I saw some gipsies up above North Adams and they were going west to beat the band. But he'll get away from them. I'll bet on Bill every time."

When I spoke of gipsies to make Mrs. Wilson feel better it seemed to scare her worse than ever.

"Nonsense!" said Pa. "Gipsies don't go around stealing thirteen-year-old boys, who can make as much noise as Bill can."

"Well, I saw some, anyhow," I told him.

Just then Skinny jumped out in front of the rest of us, with his eyes shining and his cheeks redder than I ever had seen them before, and stood there with his arms folded, like a bandit, or a Scout, I don't know which.

"Fellers," said he, "Scouts, I mean. We got Bill into this scrape and we will get him out again. This is a job for us, not for the police. If anybody can find Bill, bet your life we can. We know the call of the Ravens. We know the signs and

we know Bill better than his own folks know him. We'll track him. We'll follow him to the ends of the earth. Will you go with me?"

We sprang up with a cheer, forgetting how tired we were, those of us who had just come home from the long walk.

"Everybody scatter and look for signs."

"Wait a minute, boys," said Ma. "It's almost dinner time. You must not start without something to eat. There is no telling when you will get back. Let me give you a bite in the kitchen first."

That was just like Ma. We saw in a minute it was the thing to do and hurried in for a quick lunch.

"The boy is right," we heard Pa saying. "They'll find him, depend upon it. I never knew those boys to get into a scrape yet that they couldn't pull out of. But it won't hurt if the rest of us look around a little, too."

"Who saw him last?" asked Skinny, after we had started.

"I did," said Wallie. "We walked together

until I turned off to take the east road. He kept straight on toward the Gingham Ground and I heard him yell some time afterward."

"You don't suppose that the Gang got after him, do you, and locked him up or something?"

"I'll bet that's what they did," said Benny. "That is just what happened. They got after me, too. I was scared half to death and didn't want to go through the Grounds, but it was getting late and I knew that Ma would be worried, so I braced up and started through on a run. In a minute two of them ran out and grabbed me by the collar.

"'It's one of them village kids,' said one of them. 'Let's call the Gang and duck him. He needs it to cool off.'

"Then he whistled and a lot of the others came and they hustled me down to the river. Gee, I was mad and I was scared. Then, just as I had about given up, another boy came chasing after us.

"'Is this Benny Wade?' said he.

"'It's all that is left of me,' I told him.

"With that he jumped in and took hold of me.

"'Youse ain't a goin' to duck this kid,' said he,

'unless you duck me along with him. His partner came through here this morning and fixed my dog's broken leg and he told me to watch out for Benny Wade and have him look at the bandage, to see if it was all right. Now, kid, you come along with me and look at my dog.'

"'Duck 'em both,' said some one.

"I guess maybe they would have done it, too, if Jim Donavan hadn't come along just in time."

"Maybe it was Bill who fixed up the dog," said Hank.

"No, I did it," I told them.

We had been walking along while Benny was talking. What he said surprised us some and would have made us mad at any other time. Benny had been so worried about Bill that he hadn't said anything about himself before, and neither had any of us.

"The first thing to do," said Skinny, "is to go to Jim's house and start from there. If Bill went through the Gingham Ground I'll bet that some of the Gang saw him."

The place which we call the Gingham Ground is

a settlement near some big gingham mills. There are two long rows of brick tenement houses with a street between. We knew that Skinny was right, because Bill would have had to walk down that street between the rows of houses, and some one would have been sure to see him. He might have stopped at Jim's, or, anyhow, would have called to him when he passed.

It didn't take us long to get there, and as we came near we could see the Gang getting together. You see, they thought we were after them on account of what they had done to Benny.

We didn't pay much attention to them but went straight to Jim's house and found him eating dinner. He was surprised to see us and was glad.

"Wait until I call the Gang," said he, after we had told him about Bill.

In a few minutes they had all come up, as friendly as could be when they found out that we were not looking for a fight.

Not one of them had seen Bill. They all knew him and they felt sure that if he had gone through in daylight some of them would have seen him.

"I'll tell you what we'd better do," said Jim, finally. "I don't believe that he came this way, but, to make sure, the Gang will work north from here and ask at every house. You go back and look between here and the village. If he left there and didn't get as far as this, then he must have turned off somewhere."

We went back, stopping at every house we came to, on each side of the road. We couldn't find a person who remembered having seen him or any one like him. You see, if he passed at all, it must have been soon after seven o'clock in the morning. The men had gone to work in the mills and the women were busy in the back parts of the houses.

Then we started back again, not knowing what to do next. There was one house, larger than the others, which we had not visited, because it stood high above the road on a hillside and could be reached only by a long driveway. It was about halfway between the Gingham Ground and our house in the village. We couldn't think of anything else to do, so we went up there.

"I don't remember seeing any one," said the

lady who met us at the door. "Of course, there are boys passing at all hours of the day. I might have seen him."

We looked at Skinny in despair.

"This one," said he, "was probably making a noise. Maybe he was cawing like a crow."

"I saw him, Mama," shouted a little girl, who had come up and stood listening. "I saw a boy go past, making an awful racket, and it sounded something like a crow."

"Was he carrying anything?" I asked.

"Yes, he had a rolled-up blanket on his back. I remember thinking he looked funny and wondering what he was going to do with it. Oh, yes, he had on a uniform, too."

"It was Bill, all right," said Skinny. "We've struck the trail at last."

We went down to the road and talked it over.

"He passed here," said Skinny, "on time and going north, and he didn't pass through the Gingham Ground. We feel sure of that much. He must have turned off somewhere in the next half-mile."

"We know something else," I told him. "He couldn't have turned east, because the river is in the way and there isn't any bridge."

We made up our minds to separate, one party to work north from where we were standing; one to work south from the Gingham Ground, and the others to work in between, to see if we could find where he had left the road.

"Look for a sign," said Skinny, "and look on the west side. There isn't much chance for finding footprints."

Hank was the one who found it. We heard him yell and went to him on a run.

He came out to the roadside and waited for us, waving his hat in the air, he was so excited; then, when we had come up, took us back from the road through a sort of lane, which pretty soon turned south and wound off through the woods.

Just at the turn stood a big stone, out of sight from the road. That is why we had not seen it before. On the stone was something which set us all yelling.

It was a circle and in the circle was the picture

of a crow and there was an arrow. It was the Scout sign for "I took this path." The crow meant that whoever drew the sign belonged to Raven Patrol. We knew then that it was Bill.

"We've got him," shouted Skinny. "He went through this way so as not to meet the Gang."

It did look like that, but although we examined every inch of the way between there and the Gingham Ground, we couldn't find another sign of any kind. And we couldn't understand why he had not delivered the message to Mr. Jenks and come back home.

Sorrowfully we made our way out to the sign again and sat down to rest and talk about what to do next.

"Guess what!" said Benny, after a little. "That arrow doesn't point toward the Gingham Ground at all. It points straight back from the road. Let's go that way and see."

There didn't seem to be much use in doing it, but we had to do something.

"Come on," said Skinny, springing up. "He

is somewhere; that's a cinch, and we know that he was all right when he drew that sign."

We hurried along and soon struck a little path, up which we ran as fast as we could, for it was growing late.

"Look for another sign," warned Skinny. "Scouts and Injuns always mark the paths they take."

"Hurrah, here it is!" he shouted, a little farther on.

When we had come up, he pointed to a stone, which had been placed in the middle of the path, with a smaller stone on top of it. It was the Indian sign for "This is the trail."

We couldn't understand it, for it was leading away from North Adams.

We hurried on, calling every now and then, but not a sound could we hear, except the birds and squirrels, and not another sign or track could we find.

All that time we were going uphill and away from North Adams. At last, we came out of the woods on top of the hill, where we could see up

and down the valley, and Greylock over beyond. Feeling too disappointed to speak we threw ourselves down on the grass.

Suddenly Skinny gave a yell and we thought for a moment that he had gone crazy.

"Look! Look! Look there!" he shouted, pointing back at the mountain.

We looked; then, when the full meaning of what we saw came to us, grew as excited as he was, threw our hats in the air, and danced around and cheered ourselves hoarse.

From the very top of Greylock, two columns of smoke were going almost straight up, for there happened to be no wind to speak of. If it was Bill, and we felt sure that it was, those two columns of smoke meant:

"I have lost the camp. Help."

CHAPTER VIII

SMOKE SIGNALS ON THE MOUNTAIN

BEFORE Bill started on his trip he made up his mind that he would walk farther and do a bigger stunt than any of us. When Bill Wilson is for anything, he is for it. There is no halfway doings with him. He didn't take to the Scout business very well at first because he didn't know much about it and thought that Indians or bandits would be better. But as soon as he had joined he cared more than anybody.

Trying to do more than the other Scouts did was what got him into trouble. He started for North Adams, the same as Wallie, Benny, and myself, and he took with him a message for Mr. Jenks, as I have said. But a seven-mile walk and back again the next day was not good enough for Bill. He made up his mind that he would deliver the message first and then go on as far as Williamstown and stay all night there.

Williamstown is five or six miles west of North Adams. There is a big college there, called Williams College. I guess it was the name that made Bill think of going there.

Our valley runs north and south until it gets to North Adams and then turns west. Hoosac River turns with it. After flowing north all the time, which everybody knows is no way for a river to flow, it turns west, and so finally reaches the Hudson. Then, of course, its waters flow south in the Hudson and at last reach the Atlantic Ocean at New York.

After Bill had left Wallie the first morning of his trip, he walked along lively, knowing that he had a long way to go to Williamstown, and he did a lot of cawing on the road, just as Skinny thought. Nothing happened to him at all until he found himself almost to the Gingham Ground. Then he saw five or six members of the Gang playing ball near where he would pass.

That made him stop. Bill is brave, all right, but what is the good of being brave when they are six to your one, and the whole six have it in for you?

That is what Bill thought, anyhow, and he started to leave the road and try to work around out of sight through the woods and fields. Then he thought of something to do, which scared him at first, but the more he thought about it, the more he wanted to do it.

Hoosac Valley, as I have said, swings off toward the west at North Adams. That brings Williamstown on the opposite side of Greylock from where we live.

We found that out once when we went up on the mountain and came near getting lost, which you know if you have read about the doings of the Band. Almost straight down in front of us, on the east, was our village, with Bob's Hill back of it, looking flat and not like a hill at all. We could tell that it was Bob's Hill because we could see the twin stones, standing there like tiny thimbles on a table. Looking north, we could see North Adams; looking south, Cheshire, and on the west side of the mountain and a little north, was Williamstown.

Bill thought of that when he was wondering

how he could pass the Gingham Ground without the Gang's seeing him.

"What's the use of going that way at all?" he said to himself. "What's the matter with going straight back over the hills, climbing Greylock, and then, after seeing exactly where Williamstown is, making a bee line for it? I can deliver the message on the way back."

Say, that would be a great stunt! We are going to do it some time, when we get bigger and our folks get over being scared.

He wanted to prove to us that he had done it; so made signs at different places on the way, beginning where he turned off the road. We struck the trail at the second sign.

Bill can beat us all climbing and he went along fast, having a lot of fun all by himself. There is a path which leads up on Greylock from the Gingham Ground; he followed that.

Before he had gone far he found a couple of bottles, which some one had thrown away, and he hung those around his neck with a string. He took them both so that one would balance the

other. You see, he knew that there was no water on Greylock. It has to be carried there from some spring part way up. The day was hot, and he was thirsty, already.

When the sun grew hotter he took it easy along, picking berries and lying around in the shade. He didn't get to the spring, where he was going to fill his bottles, until almost noon. After that there was a hard climb to get to the top, as steep as Bob's Hill, maybe steeper in places.

He stopped at the spring to rest and eat his lunch; also to fix some signs.

At last he stood on the very top of Greylock, which, as you probably know, is the highest mountain in the State of Massachusetts, and it has all kinds of mountains. Our geography says that it is 3,505 feet high. Those last five feet seemed a mile to Bill, and they would to you, if you were climbing the mountain on a hot day, with a pack on your back and two bottles of water hanging from your neck.

I guess there never had been so much cawing on the top of Greylock as when Bill stood there,

after his hard climb, looking down on the hills, which did not seem like hills, he was so much higher.

The air was so clear that Williamstown seemed close. So, after resting a few minutes and drawing the sign on a flat rock to show which way he had gone, he started down the west side of the mountain on a run, whooping and yelling like an Indian at every jump.

Then, just as he was thinking how easy it was and what fun he would have bragging to us boys about what he had done, he caught his foot in a root or something, fell headlong, rolled down until he struck a tree; then lay still.

How long he had lain there, when he finally came to life again, he couldn't tell. At first he didn't know where he was or what had happened. Then he remembered and tried to get on his feet and go on.

With a cry of pain, he sank back again. He had sprained his ankle and hardly could move it without yelling.

When Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked on an

island he wrote on a piece of paper the good things and the bad things that had happened to him. To start with, he wrote on one side, "I am shipwrecked on an island," or something like that, and on the other, "but I am alive."

Bill did the same, only he didn't write it. He thought it.

"I've busted my ankle," he said to himself, "but I didn't break my bottles or spill my water.

"I can't walk a step, but I can yell to beat the band.

"I can't get to Williamstown and I can't get home, but I have something to eat in my pack and plenty of matches in my pocket.

"Nobody knows where I am, but——"

That last "but" was to much for Bill. He couldn't find anything to go with it, for he began to think of what Pa had told us, that if a person should get hurt on the mountain he might die there and not be found for weeks or years. His ankle was aching fearfully, too.

He tried yelling for a while and Bill is the best yeller that I ever saw or heard.

"Help! Help!" he cried. "HELP!"

He might as well have saved his breath for all the good it did.

Then he lay still for a long time, trying to think what to do. That was what Mr. Norton had told us.

"If anything happens," said he, "don't lose your heads. Think it over calmly. Decide what is best to do and then do it."

"I'm a Scout," said Bill to himself, "and, bet your life, I ain't a going to stay here and die on no mountain."

He took off his shoe and stocking and bathed his ankle in water from one of the bottles—not much water because he couldn't spare it, and he took a little sip himself. Then he thought of his "first aid to the injured" package.

"What's the matter with bandaging myself?" said he. "It will be good practice."

When he had finished and had rested a few minutes, he found that his ankle did not hurt him quite so much and that he could move around a little, if he didn't bear any weight on it.

He thought at first that he would crawl on his hands and knees to Williamstown, or until he came to some house, but when he tried he found that he couldn't do it.

"I'll tell you what I can do," he said at last, because he liked to hear somebody talking, even if it was only himself. "Maybe I can crawl back to the top of Greylock. Nobody ever would find me here and folks sometimes go up there."

The Boy Scouts of Raven Patrol think that it took grit to crawl up the steep and rough mountainside, with his ankle hurting at every move so badly that it made him feel faint.

It wasn't far to the top, but Bill thought he never would get there, he had to stop so many times to rest and wait for the pain to go away. An hour or more passed before he finally crawled out into the clearing, with nothing but the blue sky above him.

It was then getting late in the afternoon. Skinny was at Pumpkin Hook by that time, probably surrounding the enemy. Wallie was somewhere in

North Adams or beyond. I was hoeing the garden at the very foot of Greylock, little thinking that Bill was in so much trouble on top.

The summit of Greylock is almost level and is not very large. On the east side Bill saw a lot of brush which somebody had cut and piled up, probably to make a big fire; then for some reason had not lighted it.

He crawled over to that after the sun went down, built a little fire, and cooked a small piece of bacon for his supper, which he ate with a piece of bread and butter. It tasted good, but it made him thirsty and he didn't dare drink much water.

Then, being tired out and more comfortable, he said his prayer and repeated all of the Scout laws, from being loyal to being reverent, wondering what good it was doing him to have two dollars in the bank down in the village, and went to sleep.

When he awoke it was broad daylight. Benny and I were just starting on our hikes, down in Park Street, but he couldn't see us, Bob's Hill being in the way. By standing upon his one good foot,

he could see the village down below, and thought he could make out the very house he lived in. He was as hungry as a bear and his ankle seemed a little better, although it was still swollen so much that he couldn't get his shoe on and he couldn't step on the foot.

He had plenty of food for breakfast, but he didn't know how many meals he would need before he could get away; so he ate only a little and waited, hoping every minute that somebody would come up on the mountain and find him.

When the day at last dragged around and the sun was going down again in Hudson River, Bill knew that he would have to spend another night on the mountain and he felt pretty bad.

There were only a few mouthfuls of food left. One bottle of water was all gone and the other nearly so. He knew that by that time his folks would feel sure that something had happened and would begin to look for him. That was some comfort.

Far down below, lights shone out from the houses, one by one. Down there was his home.

One of those lights was shining out of his window, shining for him, while his mother sat and waited—waited for her boy who never would come back again.

He sobbed aloud and stretched out his hands into the darkness.

"Mother, mother," he whispered, "I wish I hadn't come."

When he awoke in the morning he was frightened to find that the little food which he had saved for his breakfast was gone. Some animal had stolen it in the night.

His ankle was still badly swollen but it did not pain him so much except when he tried to stand on it.

He was hungry and looked around for something that he could eat. A little below the edge of the mountain stood a birch tree. He dragged himself down to it and cut off long strips of the bark. This he chewed for his breakfast, washing it down with a few sips of water, which seemed hardly to wet his parched throat.

"I'll crawl down to the spring, if I can, and die

there," he thought. "Maybe they will find me sometime."

Then, as he was starting, something came to him.

Smoke signals! Perhaps one of the Scouts would see them and know what they meant.

He was too weak and lame to spell out a message, like we did on Bob's Hill. Instead, he built two fires, throwing on grass and leaves to make a thick smoke. There was no wind and the smoke went straight up. That was one of the signals which Mr. Norton had taught us. It meant:

"I have lost the camp. Help."

He hadn't lost any camp, of course, but he didn't know what else to send. He hoped it would let us know where he was and that something had happened.

All day long he tended his fires, his ankle aching horribly because he had to move around so much. Between times he sat on the mountain, looking down at Bob's Hill and Plunkett's woods and the village beyond, chewing birch bark and moistening his lips with the few drops of warm water that were left.

Late that afternoon he gave up and made up his mind that he would crawl down to the spring before dark and die there, he was so thirsty. He turned to look down at his home, perhaps for the last time, and to see Bob's Hill once more.

There were Plunkett's woods, and there, the twin stones, like thimbles, they were so far away. And there—what was that?

From the ground close to one of the stones, the one where we build our fires, a great column of smoke went up and he saw some things moving around it, like flies or ants, they looked so small. Then the column of smoke broke into long and short puffs. It was a signal.

Slowly he spelled the words:

"I-S, Is; I-T, it; Y-O-U, you; B-I-L-L, Bill?"

Jumping to his feet, although he almost screamed with pain, Bill grabbed his blanket and held it down over one of the fires, which was still sending out a big smoke; then pulled it off. Again and again he sent up the puffs of smoke. His blanket was blazing; his hands were burned to a blister; he was almost strangled with the smoke; but Bill

kept on, until he had spelled out something which could be seen from the top of Bob's Hill, far below:

.... H
. E
— L
..... P

Then he fainted away.

CHAPTER IX

FOUND AT LAST

WHEN we saw the smoke signal on Greylock, the first thing we thought of was to signal back. But Skinny said:

"Come on. He won't be looking for us here. Bob's Hill is the place. He can see us there."

We started on a run across the fields, getting more excited every minute.

"I don't see how Bill could lose any camp," exclaimed Benny.

"And I don't see what he is doing on Greylock when he started for North Adams," Hank said.

"Maybe it isn't Bill, at all," I told them. "I've seen smoke on Greylock more than once."

"It's Bill all right," Skinny said. "I can almost hear him. We don't know how he got there, but he's there and he can't get back. Something has happened."

"Anyhow, we'll soon find out," we all thought, when we came in sight of the twin stones.

"I'll run down home and get a blanket," I told them, "while the rest of you make a fire."

Our house is right at the foot of the hill and it didn't take me long. The old horse blanket which we used in signaling was in the woodshed. I only stopped long enough to wet it and call to Ma that Bill was up on Greylock signaling.

She was almost as excited as I was.

"Hurry!" said she. "Don't wait for me. I'll come as soon as I can."

I hadn't thought of waiting for anybody.

She grabbed a pair of field glasses off the shelf and rushed after me. I heard her calling to Mrs. Blackinton when she went through the yard and I had to go some to keep ahead.

By the time we had climbed the hill, the boys had a big fire going and were piling on green branches and leaves to make it smoke. Then we caught hold of the blanket by the corners, ready to shut off the smoke.

"Ask if it's Bill," Skinny told us, watching the two smokes on the mountain.

Then we signaled, "Is it you, Bill?" and repeated it. Before we had finished the second time Skinny gave a shout.

"It's Bill," said he. "He's signaling."

We could see one column of smoke break up into puffs, but couldn't see very plain because the smoke was so thin and far away.

"Here, take this glass," said Ma, handing the field glass to Skinny.

"Hurrah," he cried, after he had looked through them. "I can see real good."

Then he held up one hand and we waited while he called off the letters.

"H-E-L-P."

That was all. We waited for more but nothing came.

Before we had turned to go Ma was halfway down the hill and running to beat the band. I knew that if Bill didn't get help it wouldn't be her fault.

"See if you can get hold of Mr. Wilson,"

she called, as soon as we came in sight. "I'll telephone his house. If you can't get him, get somebody. Your father has gone to hitch up and he will be ready to start in a few minutes."

In five minutes it seemed as if the whole town knew about it and were out in front of our house, or else climbing the hill to see the smoke. Mr. Wilson came on a run and was in the wagon before Pa could stop the horse.

"I want one of you boys to go with us," said Pa. "We may need some more signaling. Benny Wade, you are the lightest. Can you stand the climb?"

"Can I?" said he. "You watch me."

The marshal chased up with a light stretcher and another lantern.

"You can't have too many," he said. "It will be dark before you get up there."

Ma came running out with a basket of bread and butter and some meat.

"We'll light a big fire on the mountain, if all is well," they told her.

"The water!" called Skinny. "Pedro, get them a big bottle."

In another minute they were off, while the others went home to wait, which is the hardest part.

I found out afterward what happened. They couldn't drive all the way up Greylock from our side. There was a road from North Adams and another from Cheshire but those were too far.

Pa planned to drive as far as they could and then to leave the horse tied and walk up the rest of the way. They went around the road by the Quaker Meeting House to Peck's Falls. From there a road goes part way up the mountain, steep and winding. It was hard pulling for the horse.

I don't believe Greylock ever was climbed so fast before, although it seemed slow enough to poor Bill waiting on top, thirsty and faint. He knew that his signal had been seen and that was something.

The first thing that he heard was a call of a crow, over to the south and far down the mountainside.

"Caw, caw, caw," came the sound, and it seemed to be Benny's voice.

Bill stood up on one foot and listened.

"Caw, caw, caw," it came again, this time nearer.

Then Bill braced himself and seemed to grow stronger, all in a minute.

"Caw," he yelled. "Caw, caw!"

The sound went floating down into the gathering darkness, until it reached two men and a boy, toiling up the mountainside.

"That's Bill!" cried Benny.

"Thank God!" said Mr. Wilson. "He's alive. We know that."

Twenty minutes later he had Bill in his arms and Benny was building the biggest fire that had been seen on Greylock since I could remember. We were watching for it down below and knew that everything was all right.

"Now," said Pa, "let's have some supper. I don't know about William, but I feel hungry."

It was late at night when they finally brought Bill home. Mrs. Wilson nearly had a fit again

when she saw them carrying him into the yard on a stretcher.

"Speak to her, son," said his father, "so that she will know you are alive."

Bill propped himself up on one elbow and gave such a yell that it scared the neighbors, and ended with a caw. Then she knew that it was all right and felt better.

Skinny was the proudest fellow you ever saw because we had found Bill. It made him real chesty and we all felt good about it.

"Say, we're the stuff," said he. "If you don't believe it, watch our smoke. That's all I've got to say. Hurry up and get well, Bill, so we can have a meeting and tell about our hikes. I want to see a First Class Scout badge on my manly bosom."

We were sitting in Bill's house at the time, to cheer him up a little because he couldn't go out without a crutch.

"What's the matter with having the meeting here?" said Bill. "I don't suppose Mr. Norton will give me a badge because I haven't delivered his message yet, but I'd like to hear what the rest

of you did. I can't get out for a few days. When I do, I'm going to North Adams and back, if it takes a whole leg. Believe me."

"You did more than any of us," Benny told him, "badge or no badge."

"I guess you won't chase over the mountain the next time," I said. "When you stick to the roads there don't anything happen."

"Oh, there don't, don't they?" exclaimed Skinny. "Say, you fellers ought to have been with me. There was something doing every minute. Ma says it's a wonder that I'm alive. I've had awfully hard work to keep from telling about it."

"Tell us about it now."

"Not much, you wouldn't be able to sleep to-night. Besides, it might make Bill's ankle worse."

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "There ain't anything the matter with me, only it hurts me to step on my foot. Come on, Skinny. Let's have it."

"No-p. We've got to have a meetin' first."

"Suppose that you have your meeting here to-night," said Mrs. Wilson, who had come into the room in time to hear what we were talking about.

Willie is a great deal better and I can have him take a nap to brace him for the story. If you boys will come around after supper you can meet right in this room, and perhaps, I don't say for sure, perhaps the neighbors will bring in some ice cream to quiet your nerves and make you sleep."

"May we bring Mr. Norton?" I asked. "He is our Scoutmaster and he ought to be with us when we tell about the doings of the patrol."

"Surely you can. He is coming, anyway. He sent word this morning that he would call to-night."

We met at Skinny's a little before eight o'clock and went over in a bunch. On the way Skinny told us what to do.

"When we get to the gate," said he, "let's stop and each one caw three times."

"What for?" I asked. "We know that he is there; don't we? Besides Bill is sick. Maybe we'd better keep quiet."

"Sick nothin'! He ain't any more sick than I am. He said so himself. He's hurt his ankle a little, that's all. Ankles can't hear, can they?"

"Maybe it will cheer him up to hear us," I told him. "He can't get out, you know. It is hard to be cooped up in the house that way, and Fourth of July coming."

"Anyhow," said Benny, "let's not all caw at once. We can take turns and it will not make so much noise."

That was what we did, standing just outside the gate, where we could see a light streaming through an open window in Bill's room.

Skinny led off with three. I followed, and the others in turn, ending with Benny. Skinny said that it sounded like the booming of minute guns in some battle or other, that he read about in a book.

Say, it surprised the folks living around there. Before we were half through, they came running out of their houses to see what was going on. It made us feel proud and we were just going to do it over again, when we heard Bill cawing in the house and Mrs. Wilson threw the door open and stood there laughing.

"I judge by the sound," said she, "that the Ravens have arrived and are in good voice."

We found Bill sitting in a big chair, with his foot propped up and his eyes shining.

At first we didn't know just how to act, until in a few minutes Mr. Norton came and then Mrs. Wilson brought in some ice cream and some clusters of strawberries, with dishes of powdered sugar to dip them into.

We knew how to act then, all right, and for a few minutes we were too busy to talk.

I am not going to tell what all the Scouts did on that hike. I already have told what happened to some of us. There didn't much happen to most of them, anyhow, any more than there did to me. It was different with Skinny. Something almost always happened to him.

CHAPTER X

A MAIDEN IN DISTRESS

"FELLERS," Skinny had told us, when we were getting ready to start on the hike, "you always ought to carry a rope. Something happens every time when you don't have a rope along."

"It happens when you do," Benny said. "Anyhow, a rope is too much bother. A blanket and a frying pan and things like that are all I want to carry."

"A rope is the thing, just the same. Didn't I lasso the robber last summer out on Illinois River, at Starved Rock? How could I lasso anything without a rope? And didn't we let you down into Horseshoe Canyon with a rope and pull Alice What's-her-name up again?"

"Bet your life we did," Bill put in. "You need a rope when you are camping out or are in a boat

on the river, but what good is it in walking seven miles?"

"Maybe it is and maybe it isn't; but, just the same, you'll be sorry if you don't take one along."

He was right, too, for Bill told us afterward that he would have given a good deal for a rope when he was sitting on top of Greylock. He didn't need it for anything, only, he said, it would have been sort of company for him.

Skinny was bound to carry a rope. When he marched down Center Street with it coiled around his shoulders, over his blanket, and with his tomahawk in his belt, people ran out of the stores to look at him.

The road that he took is uphill a good part of the way. It goes up through the foothills of the east mountain and isn't easy walking. We slide down that road sometimes in winter. When the coasting is good we can slide nearly a mile, clear into the village; then hitch on to a bob and ride back again for another.

There were no bobs for Skinny. It was warm in the sun and he loafed along, taking it easy and

looking for somebody to rescue. Once he stopped to help a man in a field. Along about ten or eleven o'clock he began to get hungry and tired. No matter where he looked there didn't anything happen, so he made up his mind to take a long rest the next time he came to some good shade, and maybe to cook his dinner.

A half-mile farther on he came to a real shady spot by the roadside, under a tree which stood in a corner of a pasture on the other side of a fence. A tiny stream crossed the road, and ran down through the pasture.

This was the place he had been looking for and, after drinking, he threw himself down on the ground and went to sleep.

He didn't know how long he slept but he felt first rate when he woke up, only hungrier than ever. Over in the pasture stood a cow with her back to him, looking at something and growing real excited about it.

"I wonder what ails the critter," said Skinny to himself. "She looks mad about something, snorting and shaking her head that way."

Just then he heard a girl's voice singing. She sang real loud, like boys whistle sometimes to keep up their courage, when they are half scared. Then in a few minutes she came in sight, walking across the pasture and keeping one eye on the cow.

Skinny hadn't seen her before because the cow had stood in the way.

"Jerusalem!" said he. "Here's luck. She's got a fire-red sunbonnet and cows don't like red sunbonnets a little bit."

On came the girl, singing louder than ever, trying to edge off away from the cow but not daring to run.

Skinny could see that the cow was getting madder all the time. He knew that something was going to happen at last, and he began to uncoil his rope.

"Run, you little fool," said he. "Run."

He meant the girl and not the cow. He said it under his breath so she wouldn't hear, for he didn't want to lose the chance to do the rescue act and have something to tell us boys about afterward.

The girl was scared. Any one with half an eye

could have seen that. The cow hadn't quite made up its mind what to do, and Skinny was beginning to be afraid that the girl would get across without giving him a chance to get in his work. Then what did she do but take off her sunbonnet and swing it around by one string, just to let the cow know that she wasn't afraid of any animal that walked on four legs.

She hadn't seen Skinny yet, on account of his being back of the cow. The cow didn't know he was there, either, until about four seconds afterward. It knew then, all right.

Maybe the cow wasn't mad when she saw that red sunbonnet whirling around in the air. She tore up the sod with her horns, gave a big snort, and started, head down.

Say, it was Skinny's busy day about that time. Before the cow could get fairly going he had crawled under the fence and run up behind, whirling his lasso around his head. Then he gave a yell like a wild Indian and threw it.

I think the yell scared the girl worse than the cow did. Anyhow, between the cow and the Indian

she was scared stiff; just stood there paralyzed. And she didn't do any more singing.

If that lasso had caught there would have been a paralyzed cow all right. Skinny threw it in great shape. It went straight for her horns, but when he yelled she lifted her head suddenly. The loop struck against one of the horns, instead of going over it, and then fell off to the ground.

"Gee!" groaned Skinny. "Missed!"

There wasn't time to say anything more, and he knew that he would have to get mighty busy or there wouldn't be any rescuing done.

When something happens that way and you have to do something first and think about it afterward, the mind seems to work like chain lightning. There was only one thing to do and it didn't take Skinny long to do that. He dropped the rope, grabbed hold of the cow's tail with both hands, and dug his feet into the ground.

"Run!" he yelled. "Run for the fence! I've got her."

When Bill heard about it he said that it seemed to him as if the cow had Skinny. Anyhow, she was

surprised some and she was mad. She will think twice next time before she does any chasing, when anybody from Raven Patrol is around, I guess.

Skinny had a good hold and she couldn't get away. First she stopped running and tried to get at whatever it was back of her, with her horns, chasing herself around in a circle.

Skinny hung on like a good fellow. He had to. If he had let go once it would have been all up with him. She never touched him. Every time the cow stopped, there was a hundred pounds of boy hanging to the end of her tail.

It was like playing crack the whip, he told us afterward, "and being the littlest fellow on the tail end."

Then for a few moments it was hard to tell which was the cow and which was Skinny, for she started on a run for the other side of the pasture, Skinny sliding and bumping behind, and both of them scared half to death. Skinny was so excited he couldn't think to let go of the tail.

Hank said that he would have given a quarter

if he could have taken a picture of it with his camera.

All this didn't take so long as it does to tell about it. The girl had reached the fence, crawled under, and was yelling for help.

Just then it seemed to Skinny as if the tail had come off in his hands, for he went tumbling along, heels over head, until he struck with a jar that almost loosened his teeth.

What really happened was that he stumbled on a stone and his hands were jerked loose. In another minute the cow was out of sight in a hollow. Skinny scrambled to his feet and went back after the rope, trying not to limp because he could see the girl looking at him through the fence.

He felt pretty chesty to think that he had rescued a maiden, only he didn't know what to do with her, now that he had saved her.

She spoke first, as he stood there sort of brushing his clothes off.

"Are you hurt, boy?"

"What, me?" said Skinny. "Me hurt? Say, didn't you see the critter run when I got after her?"

"I should say I did, only I was scared. Wasn't you scared?"

"I don't scare worth a cent," he told her. "I ain't afraid of any cow a-livin'. You don't suppose I'd 'a' chased her all over the pasture, if I'd been scared, do you?"

"N-no, but——"

"Say, if my lasso hadn't slipped, there would have been something doing. It's lucky for you that I got hold of her tail. That's the way to do it. When you twist a cow's tail, it scares 'em."

It's just as Hank says, you never can tell what a girl will do. That girl tried to say something; then choked up and went off into a fit of laughing that made the tears roll down her cheeks and left her so weak that she had to hang on to the fence.

Skinny grinned a little to be polite, but he didn't like it very well.

"Oh," said she, as soon as she could speak, "it was too—too funny for anything to see you sailing along behind the cow."

"It wouldn't have been so funny if the cow had been running toward you, instead of away from

you. You would have laughed out of the other side of your mouth, I guess."

She saw that he was mad about it.

"You mustn't mind my laughing," said she, stuffing her handkerchief into her mouth. "I can't help it. It's a disease."

"A disease?"

"Yes, it's high strikes. When folks have them they can't stop laughing. They laugh when they ought to cry, maybe."

"Sounds like a ball game," said Skinny.

"It's something like that," she told him. "Maybe that isn't it exactly but it's something. I'm better now."

"Oh, well, if it's something that ails you, I suppose it's all right. I'd laugh, too, only I am all out of breath from chasing the cow."

When he said that the girl burst out laughing again, and Skinny laughed with her. That made them feel acquainted.

"I guess I've got 'em, too," said he. "They must be catching. Well, I must be going now."

"My name is Mary Richmond," she told him

"I live in Holyoke and I am visiting over where you see that red barn."

"Mine is Gabriel Miller. I don't like the name very well. Gabe isn't so bad. The boys call me Skinny. I live down in the village and I am on a hike. I guess I'd better be going now."

"I don't see any."

"Any what?"

"What you said you were on, a hike."

"You will see one in about a minute. I am out for a long walk. I belong to the Boy Scouts and I've got to walk seven miles, camp out to-night, and come back to-morrow."

"My," said she, "you must be hungry—all that walking and—and—chasing the cow, too."

"I am," said Skinny, bracing up. "I believe I'll eat my lunch right here in the shade. Wish you'd stay and eat with me. I can cook some bacon."

Wasn't that a nervy thing to say? Skinny is brave when he gets started.

"It would be fine," she told him, "only Ma is expecting me at the house. She is visiting, too. Wouldn't it be nicer for you to come with me?

They will be glad to see you because you saved me from the cow. I am awfully hungry and Grandma is the best cook. We're going to have lemonade. She told me so. Come on, do."

"Lemonade would taste good," he said, "if I only dast."

"Huh!" said she, tossing her head. "I thought that you were not afraid of anything."

"I ain't of a cow. This is different. Say, that was a swell song you were singing. I wish I knew it."

"I'll teach it to you after dinner, if you will come. If you don't you're a 'fraid cat."

"All right. I'll go if it kills me."

Skinny says that he never ate a dinner that tasted any better than that one did. Mrs. Richmond was scared when she heard about the cow and she couldn't say enough about how he had saved her little girl from a terrible death.

"That wasn't anything," he told her. "Scouts are always doing those things. I'm going to try to save somebody from drowning when I come back along the river to-morrow."

"I'll tell you a better stunt than that," said Mary's grandfather, winking one eye at the rest of the folks. "Why don't you go up to Savoy on the east mountain. That would make a walk of about seven miles from the village. You won't find anybody drowning up there, but several deer have been seen around there lately."

"Gee!" said Skinny, his eyes sticking out when he thought of the deer. "If I only had a gun!"

"It's against Massachusetts law to shoot deer. That's why they are getting so common. You have your rope. Maybe you can lasso one. There is no law against that, I guess."

"I'll do it," Skinny told him. "Bet your life the boys will be surprised when they see me bringing home a deer. Maybe I'll get two or three. Mr. Norton didn't give me a message to anybody, so it won't make any difference which way I go."

"Don't get too many. We'd like to save a few. And be careful that some bear doesn't get you," went on Mr. Richmond, laughing to see how excited Skinny was. "They are not very common, but

once in a while one is seen on the mountain."

"How do you get up there?"

"Go back to Pumpkin Hook. It isn't far, and then follow the road which turns east. It will take you right to Savoy. You will find a pretty good road all the way, and you won't have any more trouble than you would going to Cheshire—unless," he added in a fierce voice that made Skinny jump, "unless A BEAR GETS YOU!"

"Now, father, don't scare the boy to death," said Mary's mother. "You know well enough there are no bears and the road to Savoy is a well-traveled one."

"Of course it is, or I shouldn't have suggested his going there. But there have been bears seen on the Savoy Mountain. I saw one myself, last year."

"Huh! I ain't afraid of no bear," put in Skinny, drawing himself up and looking fierce. "I tracked one once on Bob's Hill. It went up to Peck's Falls and hid in our cave. We smoked it out. I didn't have a gun or knife or anything, but I hit it with a snowball."

You could have hung a hat on Mary's eyes when Skinny told them that.

"Was it a really and truly bear?" she asked. "And did it stand on its hind legs like in the circus pictures over at the Hook?"

"It stood on its hind legs, all right," he told her, "but it wasn't really a bear. We thought it was. It made tracks in the snow just like bear's tracks, but when we had smoked it out we found that it wasn't anything but a man."

"It was Jake Yost, a foolish feller," he explained, turning to Mr. Richmond. "He had his boots on the wrong feet and wouldn't change them back for fear of changing his luck. That was what made his tracks look like bear's tracks."

It tickled them to hear about that, but it didn't tickle us boys much when it happened. It was too scary.

"If you will stop here on your way back to-morrow," said Mary's grandma, "we'll give you a nice dinner. I think you will be wanting one about that time. Mary may walk with you as far as the Hook, if you like, and show you the road."

"I think maybe I'd better go along, too, with my gun," said Mr. Richmond, "on account of the bears."

"Don't you mind his nonsense," she said. "You run along."

So off they went together, Skinny with his rope and tomahawk and Mary with her red sunbonnet, but they kept away from the pasture.

From Pumpkin Hook Skinny went on alone, up the mountain road, whirling his tomahawk around his head and every little while pretending to lasso the enemy, because he knew that Mary was watching him from below.

Then pretty soon he came to a bend in the road. He turned and waved to her, and in a minute was out of sight.

CHAPTER XI

TREED BY A BEAR

I AM writing what happened to Skinny as if we found out all about it at once, which we didn't. He told us some of it the first time, with Bill sitting up and listening and Mr. Norton asking questions whenever Skinny began to run down. But every time we saw him after that for several days he would think of something more to tell, or something a little different, so that it took a long time before we felt sure that we knew all about it.

For instance, he didn't say much at first about Mary Richmond, the Holyoke girl, except the rescue part. He was afraid that the boys would make fun of him for walking down the mountain with a girl—but I haven't told about that yet. I am going to put everything in just when it happened, so that you can understand it better.

There didn't much happen, anyhow, while he

was going up to Savoy. The road was steep and winding, and climbing it kept Skinny busy and made him wish more than once that he had gone in some other direction.

What Mr. Richmond had said about bears made him nervous. Every time he saw a stump of a tree, he was sure it was a bear, and every time he came to a part of the woods where the trees stood very close together and it looked dark inside, he had to whistle and sing louder than Mary did when she was afraid of the cow.

Whenever he felt real scared he would caw like a crow, and that made him feel almost brave again, for sometimes when you just pretend you are brave and act as if you are, all of a sudden you get brave. I don't know why it is but I have noticed it.

He kept a sharp eye out for deer, for he wanted to bring us one, but he didn't see a thing all the way up that looked like a wild animal except a calf, which ran when he threw a stick at it, and the birds, which don't count.

It was hot work but the air was fine, and he could see all up and down Hoosac Valley, and that

is worth seeing any time. If he had taken a spy-glass with him, perhaps he could have seen the other Scouts on the way to North Adams and Cheshire.

Once in a while he came to a mountain brook, gurgling and singing over the stones. Then he would throw himself down to rest and listen to the pouring water, which we boys think is the sweetest music in all the world, unless it is the cawing of a crow away off somewhere, on the mountainside.

Late in the afternoon he came to Savoy and stopped in a field to cook himself a good supper.

That night he slept in a barn, cuddling down in the haymow, where he could hear some horses stirring in their stalls. They seemed sort of like company for him, although they couldn't talk any.

"Were you not afraid up there, all alone?" Mr. Norton asked, when Skinny was telling about the horses.

"What, me?" said he. "Anyhow, I wouldn't have been, only there were all kinds of noises in

the night and once I heard something scratching at the door. I think it was a bear; maybe, two bears."

"Great snakes!" said Bill, and we all thought so, too. But Skinny waved one hand, as if that wasn't anything worth mentioning, and went on.

When morning finally came and the sun shone in through a cobwebby window across the haymow he slipped out of the barn on the side away from the house, so that the folks wouldn't see him.

Just the same, they saw him cooking his breakfast, and were going to set the dog on him. But when the farmer's wife found out that it was a Boy Scout and not a tramp she told him to come right into the house and eat with them. He went, too, because he could smell the breakfast cooking and it 'most made him crazy.

"How about it, Mr. Norton?" said Bill. "That makes two meals Skinny had given to him, not counting the dinner at Richmond's the next day, which he hasn't told about yet. That makes three. Didn't he have to cook them himself on account of the Scout business?"

Before Mr. Norton could answer Skinny spoke up.

"Aw, g'wan!" said he. "I cooked enough to make up for it, I guess. Why, I stopped two or three times and cooked something. You don't suppose a feller can climb mountains without eatin', do you?"

"I didn't eat much," said Bill with a grin, "but I wanted to."

"I think Gabriel is right," laughed Mr. Norton. "Besides it sometimes is harder to work folks for a meal than it is to cook it, yourself."

"Anyhow," Skinny told him, "I didn't get to Richmond's in time for that dinner and I paid for those other meals. I rescued the girl the first time, didn't I? That ought to be good for a dinner. And to pay for my breakfast I carried in a lot of wood for the farmer's wife. She liked it so well that she said she would be glad to have me stay to dinner. There wasn't any chance to do any rescuing in Savoy, so I had to do something else."

"That's business!" exclaimed Mr. Norton.

"Pay as you go. Gabriel, my boy, you showed yourself a true Scout and I'm proud of you."

He reached over and fastened a First Class Scout badge to Skinny's coat.

"Maybe I am a little ahead of the game," said he, "but Gabriel is leader and I think that he has earned a badge. This seems to be the psychological moment to present it."

Benny spoke up before we could stop him.

"What's a skological moment?" said he.

Say, that stumped Mr. Norton. He couldn't tell us.

"I'd like very much to give you one, William," he went on, after a little, turning to Bill. "You showed yourself a hero and you have done everything except the hike. How would it do to give you the badge now, with the understanding that you will make good on the hike later, when you get well?"

Skinny swelled all up when Mr. Norton gave him the badge, and I guess anybody would. He didn't know what to do or say at first, but in a minute he came to his senses. He jumped to his

feet and gave the Scout salute. It was great to see him.

"Fellers," said he, turning to us with his arms folded, while Mr. Norton looked on, wondering what was going to happen.

"Who are going to be the best Boy Scouts in America, or England, either?"

"We are!" we shouted.

"Who is the best Scoutmaster that ever happened?"

"Mr. Norton!" we yelled.

"Who is great stuff, if he did sprain his ankle on Greylock?"

"Bill Wilson!"

"'Tis well. Everybody caw. Now!"

There was some racket around that room when we turned ourselves loose. Bill sat there smiling and with his face all flushed up, he was so tickled over what Mr. Norton and Skinny had said.

Then Mr. Norton pulled another badge out of his pocket and started to pin it on Bill's clothes. Bill stopped him.

"It wouldn't be fair, Mr. Norton," said he. "I

started out to do my hike and I didn't do it. I know that I did something which was harder but I didn't do that. I wouldn't feel right about wearing the badge until after I had made good."

"What do you say, boys?" asked Mr. Norton, his eyes shining because he was so proud of Bill.

"Bill's all right," said Hank. "We all know that he can do the stunt and that he will do it, but he hasn't done it yet."

Then Benny spoke up.

"Guess what!" said he. "Let's all wait until Bill gets well and does it, before getting our badges. Except Skinny; he's got his."

"Bet your life I'll wait, too," said Skinny.

He started to take the badge off, but we wouldn't let him.

"Forget it," said Bill, "and go on with the story. You stopped in an interesting place. I don't believe much happened, anyhow, except the cow, and you've told us about that."

"I don't like to tell the rest. It will make you walk in your sleep and that will hurt your foot. But I'm willing to risk it if you are."

You see, when Skinny started toward home from Savoy, he made up his mind that he would lasso a deer, or know the reason why, because it would look fine to have one stuffed and standing in front of our cave at Peck's Falls. So, when he had found a place that looked wild and sort of scary, he left the road and, getting his rope in shape to throw, made his way in through the brush, as still as he could, so as not to frighten the deer away.

He didn't see any deer, but after a while he found a big patch of wild strawberries, so thick he couldn't step without tramping on some. That made him forget all about his deer for 'most an hour.

Then, all of a sudden, he heard a crackling in the bushes on the other side of a clearing, and he felt sure that his chance had come.

Skinny dropped on his hands and knees and crawled toward the sound. It was slow work because he had to be careful not to make any noise, and he grew more excited every moment.

At last he was crouching down behind some big

bushes, and on the other side he could hear the deer real plain, tramping around like a horse.

"Gee!" thought he. "It's a big one and will look great up by our cave."

He didn't say it out loud because he knew that although the deer could not smell him on account of the wind blowing the other way, he would hear him, unless he was very careful.

Then, getting the rope ready to throw, with the slip noose working easily, he parted the bushes gently and crept through.

There was a great crashing as some big animal broke his way through the bushes in front of him. Then came a snarl and a growl that made Skinny's heart almost stop beating. And there he stood, paralyzed, looking straight into the eyes of a bear!

It wasn't any Jake Yost with his boots on wrong, either. It was the real thing, looking as big as the Quaker Meeting House to Skinny, although it was really only a cub, about half grown.

I guess the bear wasn't expecting anybody to call, for he stood there, sort of paralyzed himself,

his eyes looking right into Skinny's and one big paw raised to take another step.

Skinny gave a howl and started for the nearest tree, one that was too small for a bear to climb.

Say, if tree climbing had been one of the Scout stunts, Skinny would have won two badges.

It isn't any fun to sit in a tree on a mountain, with a real live bear sniffing around at the bottom and you both getting hungrier every minute.

Skinny knew he was safe as long as he stayed in the tree, but he didn't dare get down while the bear was in sight, and the cub wouldn't go away more than a few rods. I guess Skinny looked good to him, he was so fat.

Dinner time came and went. He was still in the tree and the bear was still fooling around below.

Skinny called for help until he was hoarse, but there wasn't anybody passing at that time of day. Then he began to get mad, and when Skinny gets mad, look out!

"You think you're smart," said he, "but old Long Knife will show you a thing or two."

First he let down his rope and found that it

would reach the ground. Then he fixed the noose up in good shape, tied the other end around a limb and waited.

By and by the bear came smelling around that rope to see what it was, and that was exactly what Skinny had been waiting for. He leaned down and tried to swing the noose over the cub's head. The bear didn't know what to make of it and every time the rope would hit his nose he would growl and strike it away with his paw.

Skinny saw that he would have to get closer. He climbed down to a lower limb; then held on with one hand, swung out over the bear, and tried to lasso him with the other.

He almost did it, too, but just as he leaned still farther down, all of a sudden there was a cracking noise and the limb broke.

With an awful scream of despair, Skinny fell.

CHAPTER XII

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BEAR

THE Band, I mean the Ravens, don't know so very much about bears. That was the only bear we ever had come across and we had been berrying all over those mountains, although mostly on the Greylock side. Pa says that they usually keep away from the road, the few that are left, because they are afraid of folks.

Anyhow, it isn't any picnic to fall out of a tree at any time, especially when there is a bear at the bottom.

When the limb began to crack, Skinny knew that he was a goner. He yelled so loud that it surprised the bear and it looked up into the tree to see what was going on. Just at that second the leader of Raven Patrol landed on the cub's nose, like a thousand of brick. Boy and bear both went sprawling, one in one direction and the other in another.

Skinny was the first to get on his feet and the way he shinned up the tree again was a caution. He didn't stop to look until he had reached the limb where the rope was tied. Then he felt safe.

The bear had picked himself up and was standing close to the foot of the tree, looking up and whining, as if he didn't like being hit in the head by a boy very well.

It was the chance which Skinny had been waiting for. He gathered the rope up in his hands and opened the noose wide. Then, leaning down as far as he dared, until he was right over the bear, he dropped it. The noose fell as straight as a die and, spreading out around the cub's head, lay across his shoulders with the side nearest the tree almost touching the ground.

Just as the bear stepped one foot over the loop, Skinny grabbed the rope with both hands and gave a quick jerk. The noose tightened; and there was the most surprised bear you ever saw, tied fast to the tree! Skinny stood on the limb above like a big crow, cawing to beat the band and so excited that he came near falling again.

"Gee, but that bear was mad," said Skinny, when he was telling us about it. "He growled and he snapped and he rolled on the ground; then he ran around and around the tree, until he had wound himself up short, but he couldn't get away. It was great, only I didn't dare jump on him again. He was too crazy."

"Great snakes, Skinny!" exclaimed Bill. "You always have all the fun."

"I guess you wouldn't have thought it so much fun if you had been up in the tree and couldn't get down. I'd 'a' choked him with the rope, if he hadn't got his feet tangled up in it so that I couldn't."

"How did you get down, Skinny?" asked Benny, because Skinny had a way of stopping at the most interesting places and pretending that he was through telling about it.

In order to tell about that I'll have to go back a little in this history.

When Mr. Richmond told Skinny to go up to Savoy and to be careful not to let the bears get him, he was trying to scare a Boy Scout. He says

that he hadn't any idea there would be a bear or deer around, or he shouldn't have let him go. But the next morning a man from Savoy drove past the house and told about seeing a bear on the way down. He didn't have his gun along and besides the bear ran into the woods when he saw him.

That made Mr. Richmond feel uneasy.

"I wish I hadn't let the boy go up the mountain," he said. "I don't suppose anything will happen to him, but I'd feel better if he hadn't gone. I guess, of the two, the bear would be the most scared if they should meet."

"He told me that he'd surely come in time for dinner," said Mary.

When dinner time came she put a plate on for him. He didn't show up, of course. He was up in the tree about that time, wondering how he ever would get down. After that Mr. Richmond grew real anxious and went to the house several times to see if Skinny had come.

"That boy looked to me," he said at last, "as if he wouldn't be guilty of missing a good dinner if he could help it. I am going after him. He

may be all right, but I'm going to find out for sure."

With that, he hitched up a horse, took down his gun, and started.

"Let me go, too," Mary called after him. "I can hold the horse while you are looking."

"All right. Jump in. We'll probably meet him on the road somewhere."

The first they saw or heard of him was the yell which Skinny gave when the limb broke. It scared them.

"Take the reins," said Mr. Richmond. "There is trouble over there. Turn around and if anything comes run the old horse down the road."

Say, he was paralyzed, when he found the bear tied to a tree and Skinny standing on a limb, cawing.

"I was that flabbergasted," said he afterward, "that I hardly could pull the trigger."

But he pulled it, all right, and that was the end of Mr. Bear.

Skinny didn't like it because Mr. Richmond killed the bear. He wanted to tame it and give a show

in our barn. He was bound to take it home, anyhow, so as to save the skin.

It took a lot of pulling and hauling to get the cub out to the road, and Mary had to help before they could lift him into the wagon.

"Jump in," said Mr. Richmond, when everything was ready. "It is time that I was getting home."

"I can't," said Skinny. "You see, I am doing a stunt for the Scouts and I have to walk."

Just before they started Mary thought of something.

"Say," said she, "maybe I'd walk, too, if anybody asked me; that is, if Grandpa would let me and it wouldn't make any difference with the Scouts."

"Come on, do," said Skinny. "May she, Mr. Richmond?"

"Well," said he, "seein' as how you've got a rope and it ain't very far, I'm willin'. But it will be mighty lonesome for me."

I never saw Skinny so chesty as he was over catching that bear. And he had a right to be, for everybody was talking about it and there was a

long piece in the paper. He even wanted to change the name of Raven Patrol to the Bears, but we wouldn't stand for that. We didn't know how to make a noise like a bear, anyway.

After that the folks told us to keep away from Savoy Mountain, rope or no rope, and we had to do it. But Skinny wanted to go back and get a bear for each of us.

"I think that our patrol leader has made good," said Mr. Norton, when Skinny had finished. "What I'm wondering is, who was the most frightened, Gabriel or the bear?"

"The bear was," said Skinny; "anyhow, after I jumped on him. Say, I'll bet you fellers wouldn't dast jump on a live bear, when he was growling and showing his teeth. It was great, just like jumping on a cushion, only the bear didn't like it very well."

The other boys didn't have much to tell, much that was exciting, I mean, but Mr. Norton made us all report what we did. Hank came last of all.

"Well, Henry," said Mr. Norton, "what have

you to say for yourself? You went to Cheshire by the river road, I believe?"

"How about that new invention, Hank?" I asked. I'd forgotten all about it until then.

"Have you a new invention, Henry? Tell us about it."

"'Tain't nothin'," said Hank, squirming in his chair. "It didn't work just right. I guess I'll have to go home now. Ma said to get in by ten o'clock."

"We'll have time for your report," Mr. Norton told him.

Hank kept nudging me, trying to get me to go with him, but I wouldn't do it, so after a while he began.

You see his invention, the one he spoke to me about just before we started, was a Life Saver. When we were learning to be Scouts Mr. Norton taught us how to bring drowned people back to life again; that is, if they haven't been in the water too long. What Hank wanted to do was to invent something that would keep them from getting drowned in the first place.

"It's all right to bring them to life," he told me, "but it would be a heap better not to have 'em drown at all."

After doing a lot of thinking, he made a sort of balloon of oiled silk, with the mouth fastened to a hollow reed and a piece of potato to put over the end of the reed, instead of a cork. Hanging from the mouthpiece were two pieces of stout cord.

"What's it for, Hank?" asked Skinny, when he was showing it to us. "It looks like a bagpipe."

"It's a Life Saver," he said. "You carry it in your pocket when the air is out of it and look along the river until you find somebody drowning. Then you throw him the Life Saver, if he hasn't got one in his own pocket. He ties it around his neck, puts the mouthpiece to his lips, and blows the bag full of wind. Then he puts the potato on the end to keep the air from leaking out. He can't sink, can he? The balloon will hold him up."

"Great snakes, Hank!" said Bill. "You've got a great head—like a tack."

"A tack's head is level, just the same."

"Guess what," said Benny. "Let's go swimming up to the Basin, to-morrow, and try it."

"We can go swimming if we want to," Hank told him, "but I did try it. It worked and it didn't work."

"What's the answer?" I asked.

"Well, you see, I walked all the way to Cheshire Harbor, looking for a chance to use the Life Saver and I couldn't find anybody even in swimming, let alone drowning. The water isn't deep enough for drowning in most places, anyhow. But when I got to Cheshire Harbor I found a kid sitting on the bank of the race, fishing.

"'What you got?' he asked, when he saw me fooling with the Life Saver.

"'Jump in,' I said, after I had told him about it. 'I'll show you how it works.'

"'Jump in yourself,' he said. 'I don't want to get my feet wet. Let's see the old thing, anyway.'

"I handed it to him and he blew up the bag until I thought it would bust, and then tied it on with the strings.

"'Say, that's great stuff,' said he. 'I'll bet it will work all right.'

"When he said that, I don't know why I did it, but it seemed as if I couldn't help it. I felt as if I just had to save him. I pushed him in, balloon and all."

"Gee-e-ewhilikens!" shouted Skinny.

"You mutt!" said Bill.

Mr. Norton was too surprised to say anything, but he had the funniest look on his face.

"Did it work?" Benny asked.

"It worked all right, but——"

"But what?" I said, beginning to get mad because Hank kept stopping at the most interesting parts.

"He had tied it on to one ankle, instead of around his neck. It made his ankle float, but his head went under, and he couldn't swim. I rescued him, but I had to jump in after him and pull him out. It was hard work because he kept trying to hit me all the time. Then, after I'd got him out, I had to lick him before he would let me go on and do my stunt."

"I hardly think that was according to Scout law," said Mr. Norton, when the rest of us had finished laughing and pounding Hank on the back.

"I rescued somebody, just the same. Only it wasn't a maiden."

"We still have a few minutes," said Mr. Norton. "Suppose that we play a new game which I have here. It is a kind of invention of my own and is called baseball."

"Seems as if I'd heard of that game somewhere," said Skinny, poking me in the ribs.

"Not this one. This is parlor baseball and is brand new," replied the Scoutmaster.

He brought out a chart, marked off in squares to represent different plays, and laid it flat on the floor, about six inches from the wall, at the end of the room.

"Now," said he, "we'll choose sides, then stand off about ten feet and toss silver dollars at the squares. That is the same as going to bat. I mention silver dollars because I brought some with me. Any disk, or ring, about the same size and weight

would do as well and might be more convenient. The square on which the disk rests gives the result of your play. If the disk rolls off the chart it

HOME RUN	STRIKE	THREE BASE HIT
FLY CATCH	BATTER HIT	OUT ON FIRST
SINGLE	BALL	TWO BASE HIT
FOUL	PASS BALL	BALK

counts as a strike, and three strikes are out. Usually the Scoutmaster or Scout leader acts as umpire, calls off each play as made and keeps the score.

To-night, however, as William is not able to play, we will make him umpire and I will take part in the game to make even sides."

"Let me illustrate," he went on. "We will suppose that the first man up throws three disks and all of them roll off the chart. That counts as three strikes and he is out. The second player may throw a two-bagger or a single. He then returns to his seat and the third player, by throwing a three-bagger, brings the second man home and gains third base for himself. The runners are advanced each time as many bases as the batter makes. They also are advanced one base by a pass ball, a fly catch or an out-on-first. The first two fouls count as strikes, of course, and four balls entitle the batter to first base. The arrangement of these squares is important. The home run is guarded on three sides by strikes and in front by a fly catch. The three-base hit is as carefully guarded."

"Say, that game is all right," said Skinny, after we had finished playing. "Three caws for Mr. Norton, our 'stinguished and celebrated Scoutmaster."

As soon as he could make himself heard, Bill spoke up.

"I think the secretary," said he, "ought to put how to play that game in the minutes of the meetin'."

"There ain't goin' to be any," I told him. "It's too much work."

"I think that William's suggestion is a good one," Mr. Norton said, "and I also appreciate the force of your secretary's objection. How would it be if I should do the work? I'll have typewritten copies of the rules of the game struck off, so that each of you can have one."

That is what he did, the very next day. I am going to put the rules into this history right here, just as he wrote them, because other Scouts may want to play the game.

Scouts' Parlor Baseball.—Rules for Play.

Divide the patrol into two equal groups and arrange them in batting order on opposite sides of the room. Place the baseball chart six or eight

inches from one end of the room on the floor and indicate a mark ten feet from the chart for the "batter" to stand on. The Scouts having their inning then take turns at tossing a silver dollar (another metallic disk or ring of equal size will suffice) at the chart. Each player's record at bat is told by the square on which the dollar rests, off the chart entirely counting as a strike. If the dollar rests squarely across a line it is tossed again.

The rules of baseball govern the game. After a player finishes his turn, he takes position at the farther end of his side, and the next in line takes his turn, thus preserving the batting order. When three players have been declared out, that side is retired and the other side takes its inning. If time permits, a nine-inning game is played; otherwise the number of innings to be played should be decided before beginning.

When a "batter" wins a position on a base he is advanced at each play as many bases as the next player earns at the "bat." He also advances one base on out-on-first, fly-catch, balk, and pass-ball plays, and when forced. He must keep track of

his supposed position on the bases and report to the official when making a score.

The official, usually the patrol leader or Scoutmaster, decides the plays and tosses the dollars back to the players. He also keeps the score, and may correct a player, if necessary, for being noisy, or for leaving his seat when not playing. In fact, he is in control of the game, but is not allowed to play except when there is present an odd number without him.

The chart should be made of stiff paper so as to lie flat on the floor, or of cloth, in order to be tacked down. Each square should be 9 x 9 inches, but a smaller size may be used if the room is not large. In that case the players should stand less than ten feet from the chart. The squares must be labeled as in the diagram. Young Scouts, or beginners, are sometimes allowed to stand eight, or even six, feet from the chart, in order to make the sides more equal. This and any other questions that may arise are decided by the official.

CHAPTER XIII

EAGLE PATROL JOINS THE SCOUTS

YOU must not think, when you read this history, that something all the time was happening to us Scouts. I am only telling about what did happen. Pa says that when it comes to starting things we have them all beaten to a frazzle and Ma told us that it would be a mercy if we ever lived to grow up, without losing any of our hands or feet. But we don't think so. Boys have to be doing something all the time, don't they? If they didn't they would get into mischief.

Anyhow, there didn't much of anything happen after Skinny lassoed the bear, for a long time, unless you count the Fourth of July. Nobody can help having the Fourth of July. It's part of the year. It is for our country.

One Fourth of July, long ago, even before Pa was born, they rang old Liberty Bell in Philadel-

phia, to beat the band, and they fired off guns. 'Cause why? 'Cause there was a paper signed on that day, which said that the United States of America should be free and independent. But England was like old Pharaoh, with the Hebrew children, that the Bible tells about. They didn't want to let us go. I don't blame them much for it, either, but Skinny does.

Anyhow, I guess God must have meant for us to go free, just as He did the Children of Israel because, although England was the greatest Nation in the world and the best one, too, it seems to me, and we were only a few scattering colonies without much money or anything, we came out ahead. That is why Skinny thinks that George Washington could have licked Napoleon Bonaparte with one hand tied behind his back.

So we have the Fourth of July, and we boys ring the church bells at four o'clock in the morning, when they don't catch us at it, just like old Liberty Bell was rung so many years ago.

One of Skinny's ancestors was killed in the battle of Bunker Hill. That is what makes him so fierce

against the Britishers. Every Fourth of July he has us go up on Bob's Hill or somewhere and fight the battle all over again.

The time I am telling about we built a fire on the hill and rang the church bells and fired off firecrackers until we were tired and half starved; then went home to breakfast. Everybody promised to meet again at my house about nine o'clock.

Soon after nine we all were sitting on our side steps, talking over where we should go for our battle, when Skinny happened to stand up and look down the street.

We heard him make a noise like a snake and he dropped off the steps to the ground so quickly that we thought at first he had a fit or something, until he made a motion for us to follow him and began to crawl toward the fence.

We didn't know what the matter was, but knew that it was something important, so we crawled along after him as fast as we could. When we reached the pickets he pointed and we peeped over the top, careful not to let more than our eyes be seen.

What we saw was three members of the Gingham Ground Gang coming up the street, walking in the middle of the road and looking on both sides as they came, as if they were expecting trouble and wanted to be ready for it.

Two of them had red shirts, and that made Skinny mad because it made him think of his ancestor who was killed at Bunker Hill.

"The Redcoats are coming," said he in a hoarse whisper, so that they wouldn't hear, but fierce-like, just the same. "Wait until you can see the whites of their eyes; then, 'charge, the ground's your own, my braves. Will ye give it up to slaves? Hope ye mercy, still?'"

It was a part of his last day piece at school and sounded fine.

"Charge nothin'!" said Bill. "The Americans didn't do any charging at Bunker Hill, I guess. The Britishers did the charging. The Americans waited behind a fence until they got near enough and then let 'em have it, until their ammunition gave out. Then they ran. That's what they did."

That was true, too, but, just the same, it was a

victory to hold the hill as long as their powder lasted, and Bill knew it, but he liked to get Skinny mad.

"Bill Wilson," said Skinny, "you are a nice patriot! You are a Scout and a half; that's what you are—not! So are we going to run but, bet your life, we're going to run toward the enemy. If you want to stay here behind the fence you can do it. The rest of us are going to charge."

Bill gave me a thump in the ribs and grinned, but didn't say anything. I saw Benny whisper something, his eyes shining with excitement; then Skinny motioned to us what to do.

Each of us lighted a firecracker and held it with the fuse sputtering and sizzling, until they were almost opposite. Then we threw the crackers under their feet. They went off like a volley of musketry. At the same time we gave a great caw and jumped the fence.

"Give it to 'em, fellers," yelled Skinny. "These are the guys that wanted to duck Benny in the mill pond."

Say, it was great. The firecrackers surprised

them, for they hadn't seen us, and we were over the fence and upon them before they could run. Things were lively in Park Street for a few minutes. Then, all of a sudden, we heard a man's voice say:

"Scouts, attention!"

And there was Mr. Norton, looking surprised and sorry!

We all stood up with a jerk and saluted, and the Gingham Ground boys started to run. They only went a few steps, however, and then waited to see what was going to happen.

"Scouts," said Mr. Norton, sternly, "what sort of brawl is this, on the Fourth of July?"

He was looking at Skinny, he being Scout leader.

"'Tain't a brawl," said Skinny. "It's the battle of Bunker Hill; that's what it is."

"Oh, it is, is it? On which side are you Scouts fighting?"

"We are Americans, of course."

"Well, if I remember my history right, in that battle a little handful of Americans faced the British soldiers and held them back until their powder

gave out. And here the American army seems to be attacking a handful of British."

"That's what I told him," said Bill.

"Anyhow," said Skinny, "those guys tried to duck Benny that time when he was coming home from his long hike. So we thought that we would duck them in the race. Didn't they try to duck you, Benny?"

Benny nodded.

"How about Scout law?" asked Mr. Norton.

"Scout law doesn't say we mustn't duck our enemies."

"It does, too," Bill told him. "It says that we must be kind to animals."

That was a hot one and it made us all laugh.

"How much more should we be kind one to another," said Mr. Norton.

"Well, it wasn't very kind to duck Benny," insisted Skinny.

"No, and they didn't do it. If I have been correctly informed, they let Benny go because John here was kind to a dumb animal."

That was true and I said so.

"Even if they had ducked him, don't you think that it would be better to heap 'coals of fire' upon their heads?"

It surprised Benny to hear Mr. Norton talk like that.

"We wouldn't do such a thing," said he. "Besides, we haven't got any hot coals."

"Yes, you have," laughed Mr. Norton. "The 'hot coals' I mean are kind words and kind actions. What I meant to say was that you should return good for evil and then your kind words would make those boys feel as if you were putting coals of fire on their heads."

"I don't believe we ought to do it," Skinny told him, "if it is going to hurt that bad."

"Suppose we try it and see. I think perhaps it will not be quite so painful."

"Boys," said he, turning to the Gingham Ground bunch just as they were starting away. "I have organized these eight village lads into a patrol of the Boy Scouts of America and we have planned to have a campfire this evening on Bob's Hill. These Scouts of mine mean all right. They are

simply working off a little misdirected patriotism. Now, what we want, is for you to meet with us, you and the rest of the Gang. Will you do it?"

They didn't want to at first.

"There are Boy Scouts," he went on, "in all parts of the civilized world; in England, too, Gabriel, as well as in this country, and the Law says that all Scouts are brothers to every other Scout. There are a half million in the United States alone. I have been appointed Scoutmaster for this district and I want to organize one or two more patrols so that I can have a troop. I have had you boys in mind ever since you so nobly turned out to help find William, the time he was hurt on Greylock. It will be much the same as the Gang, only better. You can keep the same leader if you wish, and I know a man who will buy uniforms for you all. Will you come to-night so that we can talk it over? What do you say?"

The uniform business settled it.

"We'll come, if the rest of the Gang will," they told him.

"Good! Shake hands on it."

"Attention, Scouts!" shouted Mr. Norton, after he had shaken hands.

"Salute enemy!"

We gave the Scout salute to the Gingham Ground boys, while they stood there grinning and not knowing what to do.

Then, after whispering together, they gave us the Gang yell. It was great.

"We'll be there," they called, as they started up the street.

They were, too, ten of them, with Jim Donavan at their head. They came across lots from the Quaker Meeting House, soon after we had gathered around the big stone where we have our fires, just as they had come two years before, the time we had our big fight and came to know Jim.

Mr. Norton saw them coming and went to meet them.

"This is fine," said he, after we all had sat down on the grass around the fire. "You are a pretty husky bunch of fellows, and Raven Patrol

will have to go some to keep up, after you get started. Skinny—I mean Gabriel—suppose you tell our visitors something about the Scouts."

"It's great," began Skinny. "We've been bandits and we've been Injuns, but Scouts beat 'em all. The woods are full of 'em all over the country, and they go about with uniforms on, doing good and having fun. They are like an army. We are one company, you will be another. I'm the same as captain, only they call me patrol leader. Mr. Norton is Scoutmaster, and there are officers above him, only we never saw them. We learn all about woodcraft and signs and signaling and how to do a lot of things, and we rescue people and do all kinds of stunts and get badges. The Ravens are going across the mountain on an exploring trip. I am going to look for a cave and maybe there is treasure in it. Our patrol animal is the crow, and it 'most ought to be yours because you live so near the Raven Rocks."

Skinny had run down by this time, although Bill was winding him up like a clock behind his back and making a clicking noise with his tongue.

"G'wan!" said he, turning around and catching him at it, "or I'll biff you one."

"Perhaps I'd better add a little to that explanation," said Mr. Norton.

Then he told all about it, much as he had told us that first time, and about Scout law; what it meant to be a Scout; how it made boys manly, and how much fun they would have.

"What I want is a troop," said he, when he had finished the story. "Several patrols together are called a troop. I would be in charge as Scoutmaster. Raven Patrol is now in pretty good shape. We are going on a camping expedition in a few weeks and we'll have a good chance to practise up on signaling, swimming, following trails through the woods, and things like that. Next year I should like to take a whole troop along. What do you say? Suppose you go over by that other stone and talk about it among yourselves."

"I know what I'll say, right now," said Jim, "but perhaps we'd better talk it over just the same."

We saw them whispering together for about five minutes. Then they came back.

"We'll do it," said Jim. "And we'll do the best we can, only we may make mistakes at first. We are going to take the American eagle for our patrol animal on account of this being the Fourth of July."

"Everybody makes mistakes," Mr. Norton told him, "but the boy or the man who has the right stuff in him never makes the same mistake twice. Suppose that you elect a patrol leader to-night before we separate, because we shall want to consult together a great deal in the next few days and I shall be too busy to see you all."

"Jim," they began to yell, all keeping time. "Jim! Jim! Jim!"

"Jim, you seem to be elected," said Mr. Norton, reaching out and shaking hands with him.

"Speech!" yelled Hank.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Benny, getting up on his feet and bowing right and left, "the Honorable James Donavan will now say a few words, if he dast."

Jim looked as if he wanted to run, but in a minute he braced up.

"I never made a speech in my life," said he, "and I ain't going to make one now, but you will find the Gang true blue. We ain't much on clothes, and our folks haven't got much money, but we'll do the best we can, if you will tell us how. And we are much obliged for taking us in."

"Three cheers for Captain Donavan and Eagle Patrol," shouted Mr. Norton, waving his hat. "Now!"

I'll bet they heard us down in the village. After it was quiet again I saw Skinny whispering something to Bill. Bill nodded his head and passed it on to Hank, and finally it came to Benny and me, who sat at the end of the line. We nodded and began to creep nearer the fire while waiting for the signal.

"Caw!" yelled Skinny, all of a sudden, like you sometimes hear a big crow in the Bellows Pipe.

As he yelled, he grabbed a burning brand out of the fire, and the rest of us did the same. Then we formed a circle and danced a war dance around

the Gang, whirling our brands in the air until the sparks flew in the growing darkness and there seemed to be a ring of fire.

"Shall we eat 'em alive, my braves?" chanted Skinny.

"No," we shouted. "They are brothers."

"Shall we mop the earth with 'em?"

"No," we yelled. "They are Scouts."

"What shall we do?" asked Skinny, stopping in front of Jim, who was too surprised to say anything.

"Give them the glad hand," we answered.

"'Tis well," said he, grabbing Jim by the hand, while we did the same to the others.

"I'll tell you what," said Mr. Norton, a little later. "I feel so good over this that I'll buy. Lead me to a soda fountain."

CHAPTER XIV

PLANNING A CAMPING TRIP

WE boys often think of what a fisherman told us one summer day, out on Illinois River, at the foot of Buffalo Rock.

"Play," said he, "is work that you want to do and don't have to do," or something like that.

Ma often says, when she sees us playing, that if she should make me work that hard I would think I was abused.

I guess, maybe, that is so. It surely is some work to chase uphill and around, play ball, and do all kinds of stunts, and sometimes when night comes we feel tired.

I went home to supper one day, all fagged out, so tired I hardly could drag one foot after the other, and flopped down in the nearest chair.

Ma heard me and put her head in at the door.

"It gives me pain," she said, "to inform you

that the woodbox is empty and I need a hotter fire to bake those biscuits that you like so well."

"Oh, Ma!" I exclaimed. "Can't you get along until morning. I'm all in."

"Why, you haven't done a thing to-day!" she told me.

I had climbed up and down Bob's Hill six times; been up to Peck's Falls and the cave once; followed the brook over rocks and fallen trees to where it tumbles out of a sunshiny pasture into the shade of the woods in a great watery sheet; been swimming in the Basin, on the other side of the valley; played a match game of baseball at the Eagle ground; played Indian in Plunkett's woods, tracking the enemy through the forest; played foot-and-a-half, until I thought my back would break, and wrestled with Skinny, until he fell on me like a thousand of brick. But I hadn't done anything all day! Oh, no!

"You don't want me to do it, do you?" she said.

Of course, I didn't want that; so, tired as I was, I dragged out to the shed and brought in an armful of wood.

Just then I heard a whistle, followed by the caw of a crow from in front of the house, and I chased out to see what was doing.

It was Benny. He had come over to tell me that there would be a Scout meeting at his house that night.

"John's too tired," Ma told him. "He hardly was able to bring in four sticks of wood."

"I feel better now," I hurried to say. "The exercise did me good. After I have had some of your delicious biscuits and some honey, I'll be all right again. Besides, I'd hate to miss a Scout meeting; I learn so much there. Will the wood I brought in last until morning?"

"I thought Mr. Norton was away?" she said.

"He is; but they are going to have a meeting, anyhow."

"Oh, please let him go, Mrs. Smith," put in Benny. "Pedro is our secretary. We can't have the meeting without him."

Ma likes Benny so well I just knew she would have to give in. She knew it, too, I guess, for she

looked at us a minute, sort of smiling to herself; then she said:

"Well, if he will come home at nine o'clock and promise to take a nap to-morrow afternoon, I'll let him go. He has been losing too much sleep lately."

I didn't think much of that nap business. Daytime wasn't made to sleep in, except, maybe, the early morning hours when you first wake up.

"I'll promise to lie down and shut my eyes," I told her, "but I can't promise to take a nap, can I? The sleep may not come."

That is true. I've laid awake a lot of times fifteen or twenty minutes and maybe more, at night, trying hard to go to sleep and not feeling a bit sleepy.

That is why I was in bed when Skinny came around the next afternoon. He knew that I would be, and instead of coming into the back yard and up on the stoop, as he usually does, he went up the drive between our house and Phillips' and whistled softly under my window.

With one bound I was out of bed and looking down at him. He had on his Scout uniform, and his rope was wound around his shoulders.

I was just going to tell him to wait until I could come downstairs, when he put one finger to his lips, then looked up and down the drive to see who was watching. There was nobody in sight. Ma was taking a nap in her room and I guess Mrs. Phillips was, too, across the way.

"S-s-t!" he hissed. "Are you alone?"

I nodded. It didn't seem safe to say anything.

"You ain't chained to the bed, or nothin', are you?"

"Nary a chain," I told him. "We are all out of chains."

"'Tis well!" said he, coiling up the rope in one hand and getting ready to throw. "Quick, now, and mum's the word!"

I caught the rope as it came in through the window and fastened one end to the bed. Then I threw out the other end, climbed out myself, and shinned down.

"What's the matter?" I asked, as soon as I had reached the ground.

"Let's go around and untie the rope; then I'll tell you."

A few minutes later he was showing me a letter which he had from Mr. Norton, who was away on business. This is what the letter said:

"DEAR FELLOWS:—I shall be at home in a few days and should like to have a meeting of Raven Patrol to talk up our camping trip. Are you thinking about it and planning where to go? The pasture above Peck's Falls would make an ideal camp. There is water and sunshine and shade and old Greylock. That would suit me pretty well, but it is so near home it might not suit you. If not, I have a regular trip over the mountain in mind, one that will take a hike of several days to get us there. Talk it over among yourselves and ask your folks about it. Then meet at my house next Saturday night. We'll decide the matter and begin to get ready. Yours sincerely,

"CHARLES NORTON, Scoutmaster."

"Ain't he a brick?" said Skinny, when he had finished reading. "What do you say, old Scout?"

"I say hike," I told him. "That pasture above Peck's Falls is where Tom Chapin tried to paralyze a bull by the power of the human eye, like the school reader says, and got thrown over the stone wall by the critter. No more of that for muh!"

"We'd have a rope along, you know."

"Yes, and who'd tie it and what would the bull be doing all that time?"

"I'd rather go over the mountain on a hike, myself," he said. "Come on, let's ask the other boys."

"Wait a minute while I fill the woodbox," I told him.

Skinny helped me do that and we were soon on our way.

The other boys felt just as we did about it. Of course, it is always fun to be near our cave and it is a fine place to get into when it rains, but we could go there any old time.

The folks seemed to think near home would be better, until we told them about the bull and how

near we all came to getting killed. They had forgotten about that and so had we, almost.

Finally Pa settled it for me.

"I am willing to leave it to Mr. Norton," he said. "As long as he goes with you I don't care much where you go, for I know that he will take as good care of you as I could myself. His hold on you boys is remarkable and I am willing to back him in anything that he wants to do. I'll say this much, however. He is going to have his hands full when he undertakes to look after you boys for a week or two at a time."

We hardly could wait until Saturday night to hear Mr. Norton's plan and decide what to do.

He seemed glad to see us when the time came, only he wouldn't hurry the meeting or leave anything out. Skinny, being patrol leader, always acted as chairman and pounded the table, when he could find one to pound.

"The meetin' will come to order," said he, looking around for something to thump and not finding anything but Bill Wilson, who dodged out of the way.

"The secretary will call the roll."

I called the names of the boys, and each one in turn arose and gave the Scout salute, first to Mr. Norton, then to Skinny.

"Is there any business to come before this 'ere meetin'?" he asked.

"Mr. President," I said, jumping up.

"The gentleman from Park Street," said Skinny, as big as life, just as Pa had taught us to do at meetings in our barn.

"We have with us this evening our Scoutmaster, who, I think, has something to say."

"'Tis well," said Skinny. "We'll harken unto his words of wisdom."

"Before I speak the words of wisdom which our patrol leader has so kindly mentioned," laughed Mr. Norton, "I will ask Mrs. Norton to refresh and fortify us with some lemonade."

Benny reached the door almost as soon as she did.

"Let me do it, Mrs. Norton," he said.

He grabbed the pitcher and tray and poured out a glass for her; then went around the circle. It tasted fine on a warm night.

"Mr. Chairman," said Mr. Norton, after we had emptied the pitcher. "I want to call up the question of our camping trip. Have you boys thought about the matter?"

"We haven't thought of much else," Hank told him.

"Well, how about it? Shall we camp out above Peck's Falls? What do you say, William?"

"It's too near home," said Bill. "Ma would get scared the first night and call me back."

"That certainly would be serious. What do you say, Mr. Secretary?"

"I say so, too," I told him. "It's fine up there and wild and all that, but let's go where we never have been before."

"How about it, Mr. President?"

"It's me for the hike," said Skinny.

The other boys all said the same.

"It seems to be unanimous," said Mr. Norton. "I thought that probably you would feel that way. Well, this is what I have in mind, in case you decide to take the trip, instead of remaining near home. What do you say to hiking straight east

over Florida Mountain, as far as Deerfield and the Connecticut River? We can get a horse and carry our camping outfit and supplies in a wagon. We can take turns driving. It will rest us, and if anybody should give out the wagon will come in handy. We can take as long a time as we want on the way, camping out each night."

Mr. Norton stopped and looked at us to see how we liked the plan. Say, it didn't take him long to find out. Every boy jumped to his feet and shouted. Skinny forgot that he was chairman and started to march around the room, shooting and striking at the enemy, and we all fell in line after him except Bill. He stood on his hands, kicked his feet in the air, and whistled through his teeth.

Mr. Norton looked pleased.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, as soon as we had taken our places again. "I hardly think it necessary to put that to a vote except, perhaps, as a matter of form. The next question is, will your folks let you go? Sometimes fathers and mothers have very decided notions about what they want

their boys to do and more especially what they don't want them to do."

I told him what Pa had said about being willing to have us go anywhere with him, and the other boys said that their folks felt the same way.

"Good! We'll consider that settled and get down to details as quickly as possible. I should like to get started in about two weeks, which will be early in August. We'll call another meeting in a few days and I'll have a list of the articles needed and their cost ready to submit to you. I know where we can get tents, but there are a whole lot of things we shall need in the woods, besides things to eat. Is there any more business to come before the meeting, Mr. Chairman?"

"There is," said Skinny, who had been scribbling something on a piece of paper. He handed it to me to read, and this is what it said:

"Resolved, that Mr. Norton is great stuff."

"All that are in favor of the motion salute the Scoutmaster."

That ended the meeting. We had to have sev-

eral more like it before we could get everything ready for the trip.

"It is early yet," said Mr. Norton. "If you would like to have me, I'll tell you a story about what I think was one of the greatest scouting trips ever undertaken."

CHAPTER XV

SCOUTING IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST

"SOME of you boys went out to Illinois, last summer," he began. "Did you go as far as the Mississippi River?"

"No, but we camped out on the Illinois River," I told him, "and that flows into the Mississippi."

"We explored," explained Benny, "just like LaSalle and Tonty and the other guys did. Skinny was LaSalle and I was Tonty."

"LaSalle and Tonty were great scouts. Do you remember when they made those early explorations?"

"I think it was somewhere around 1680 or 1681," said Skinny, who was always good in history. "Mr. Baxter told us all about it while we were sitting on top of Starved Rock, where LaSalle once had a fort."

"There was a great country west of the Missis-

sippi, about which LaSalle knew very little, although when he explored the river he took possession of the land in the name of his king, and he called the country Louisiana.

"At that time, with the exception of a few fur traders and missionaries, all the people who came to America from the Old World settled along the Atlantic coast and the Great Lakes, in various colonies. Some of these afterward became the thirteen original states of the United States of America.

"After Thomas Jefferson became president, he had a chance to buy Louisiana of Napoleon, who was then at the head of the French government, and he did so."

"Huh! Napoleon!" said Skinny. "George Washington could lick——"

"Aw, ferget it, can't you?" said Bill. "You are stopping the story."

"That gave us a vast territory, reaching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains. Nobody knew very much about it, or about the country west of the Rockies. Jefferson may have been looking far into the future when he made the

Louisiana purchase, but probably his more immediate purpose was to secure undisputed possession of the wonderful Mississippi River.

"That was in 1804, only a little more than a lifetime ago and nearly a century and a half after LaSalle explored the river and took possession of the country. Little, if anything, was known about the country at the time of its purchase by the United States more than was known in LaSalle's time. A few hardy traders went up and down the river, buying furs of friendly Indians, and that was all.

"Naturally, after Jefferson had bought it, he wanted to know something about his purchase. So he appointed two men to explore the new country. I want you to remember their names, because they did a great work. One was Meriwether Lewis and the other William Clark, and you will find their trip described in your school history as 'the Lewis and Clark expedition.' I can't see why their exploration was not attended by as much danger and hardship as LaSalle's, which had been undertaken so many years before. The dense forests and great

rivers of the West were all unknown and there were many hostile Indians.

"What did you boys do, when you made up your minds to explore the rivers in Illinois last summer?"

"We built a boat," Hank told him.

"Exactly. And that was what Lewis and Clark did, or, rather, it was done for them at Government expense. A keel boat, fifty-five feet long and drawing not more than three feet of water, was made for them at Pittsburgh, where, if you remember, two rivers unite to form the Ohio. This boat had places for twenty-two oarsmen and carried a large, square sail. Steamboats were not known in those days, although a few years afterward Robert Fulton ran one on Hudson River. The Government also provided two smaller boats and loaded them with coffee, sugar, crackers, dried meats, carpenter's tools, presents for the Indians, and things like that. A few horses also were taken along in the large boat.

"The leaders selected a crew of twenty-five men, and one fine day the whole outfit started down the

Ohio River. When they reached the Mississippi they turned north and soon made their way up the great river to St. Louis. St. Louis was a French trading station then. Now it is a large city. A few years ago the hundredth anniversary of the Louisiana purchase was celebrated by holding a world's fair in St. Louis.

"There more men joined the expedition and considerable information that President Jefferson wanted was picked up about the Indian tribes who lived up and down the river.

"Finally, May 14, 1804, the explorers started on the real trip. It wasn't easy work any longer, for they had to row against the mighty current of the Mississippi. After they had gone a few miles they came to another great river, which was pouring a dirty looking, yellow flood into the Mississippi. Who can tell me what that river was?"

"The Missouri," said Benny, who had been studying about it in school. "The Mississippi River, with its principal tributary, the Missouri, is the longest river in the world."

"Right you are. If you will look on some map

you will see how it is possible to go in a boat from Pittsburgh almost across the continent. Lewis and Clark turned into the Missouri and started for the then unknown Northwest. They made their way along very slowly, for the river was swollen with heavy rains and the current was very strong.

"After much labor and hardship they managed to reach the mouth of the Osage River. There they went into camp and sent out an armed party to explore the interior. When the party returned they brought back ten deer and all had a great feast on the river bank.

"Once more they breasted the fierce current, narrowly escaping shipwreck several times. Once the wind was so strong that they were obliged to anchor and go ashore. Again they had to pull their boats along with ropes through some rapids."

"Betcher life they didn't go without a rope," said Skinny. "Why——"

Somebody threw a sofa pillow just then and it struck exactly where his face happened to be. Before he could find out who did it Mr. Norton went on.

"At last they reached the mouth of the Kansas River. A large city stands there now. Does anybody know the name of it?"

"That is too far from home," said Benny. "I know what city is at the mouth of Hoosac River. There ain't any."

"Kansas City now stands where they went into camp. They divided into two parties. One went out after game, so that there should be plenty to eat, and the other explored the country."

"It's fun to explore," said Bill.

"Probably these men found a certain pleasure in it, notwithstanding the hardships. They were seeing something new every day. After a time they started once more and late in July reached the mouth of the Platte River. They had heard that a tribe of Indians were living near there, so Lewis and Clark went out with a party to find them and tell them that the country now belonged to the Great Father at Washington. Under some bluffs, opposite the present city of Omaha, they sat in council with the Indians, made them gifts,

and smoked the peace pipe. The Indians didn't seem to care who owned the country so long as they received presents and had room enough to hunt. A city now stands on those bluffs where the Indian council was held. I guess you can tell me the name of that one."

"Council Bluffs," said two or three of us at the same time.

"Then on went the explorers up the river, through a wonderful country. Vast prairies, covered with grass and without any trees, stretched away in every direction, as far as they could see, and great herds of buffalo roamed up and down. On they went, through what is now Nebraska; then through South Dakota; then, North Dakota, where some fierce Indians dwelt. Another council was held and more presents were given. When the boat was about to put off after this council, the Indians grabbed hold of the cable and held it. They wouldn't let go."

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "I'll bet they didn't do a thing to those Injuns. I'll bet they paralyzed them. They had guns, didn't they?"

"Yes, and they did sort of paralyze the savages, I guess.

"'Take aim but don't fire,' Lewis told his men.

"The next second those Indians were looking into the muzzles of about twenty-five guns."

"That's the stuff!" shouted Skinny, swinging his arms and then pretending to shoot. "Did they kill them all?"

"I am afraid that you boys are a little blood-thirsty," said Mr. Norton. "They didn't shoot at all. When the Indians saw the pointed guns they dropped the cable and pretended that all they wanted was to do some more trading. The white men were glad enough to let it go at that and get away as quickly as possible.

"It soon became necessary to go into camp for the winter. An island in the river was chosen for the purpose and they spent the winter there. The Indians in the vicinity proved to be friendly. They never had seen white men before, possibly that was the reason. Some of the things which are very common to us seemed wonderful to them. Do you remember how I lighted the fire one day,

when we wanted to cook dinner on Bob's Hill and had forgotten the matches?"

"With a sunglass," I told him.

"Well, that didn't seem very astonishing to us because we were used to it, but the Indians had never seen a sunglass. They started their fires by rubbing two sticks together. Even the whites had to use a flint and steel, for the art of making matches hadn't been discovered. Captain Clark carried a sunglass in his pocket. One day he went to an Indian village, intending to smoke a peace pipe with the chief. As he was entering the village, he saw some wild geese flying over and shot one. The Indians heard what seemed to be thunder and saw the goose fall, and it scared them. They ran into their wigwams and closed the skin doors. Soon after Captain Clark came up to the wigwam of the chief, without thinking he was doing anything out of the ordinary, he pulled out his sunglass and lighted his pipe with it.

"The frightened Indians were peeking out of their wigwams, and when they saw the white man start a blaze in his pipe by holding up one hand,

they felt sure that he was a spirit. The Redskins gave one yell and ran into the woods. It was a long time before they could be made to understand.

"Spring came at last and the impatient party started up the river again. The way grew more and more difficult. They were now a long distance from the mouth of the river, and the water was shallow in places and filled with dangerous rocks. Often they had to get out and wade, pulling the boats along by the cables.

"May 26 they passed the mouth of the Yellowstone River and for the first time saw the Rocky Mountains in the distance, covered with snow and looking very grand. They were then in Montana, or what we now call Montana.

"In June they heard the roaring of a cataract, and Lewis started out afoot to find it. After he had traveled for hours he climbed a cliff and at last looked down upon the cataract. So far as we know he was the first white man who had ever seen it, although thousands see it every year now. The cascades of the Missouri stretch for thirteen

miles, with foaming rapids between. It is a great sight."

"Gee, Peck's Falls ain't in it," said Skinny. "Did he find a cave?"

"History fails to mention a cave. Lewis went back and ordered the boats to proceed up the river as far as the first rapids. The question was, how to get around those cascades. They couldn't go up the river, so they had to get the boats around in some way. Their horses had died during the winter. There was nothing to do but drag the boats around eighteen miles. The men went to work and made rough carts, felled trees, cleared away bushes, dug out rocks, leveled off the ground, and pulled, pushed, and struggled on, until at last the work was accomplished and the boats were launched again in the river above the rapids.

"But soon the river became too shallow for the large boat and they had to stop again. Then they cut down trees and made 'dugouts.' They paddled on until finally they came to a most wonderful place. We think that the ravine below Peck's Falls and that at the Basin are grand and beautiful, and

so they are, but they found a great canyon, whose walls in places were a thousand feet high.

"Beyond this canyon they could not go in their boats, for they were at the foot of the first range of the Rockies. They had to leave their boats there and climb. But, first, Lewis started out alone to find some Indians for guides.

"The brave man made his way to the top of the ridge and looked down into the valley beyond. In that valley flowed a river, and far up the stream he could see an Indian village. It was the home of the Shoshones. He managed to reach the village, and by offering presents induced some of the Indians to go back with him, bringing horses, and to guide his men across the mountains.

"The trip was a very perilous one, even with guides, and it took them a whole month to cross. Up, up they climbed, so high that they could not find any game to shoot. One by one, the horses died from exhaustion, and the starving men ate the flesh to keep themselves alive.

"After terrible hardships, they finally left the mountains behind and came upon streams which

flowed toward the west. Here they rested, secured a new supply of food, built new boats, and then, when all was ready, paddled down the Lewis and Clark rivers into the broad Columbia, which, as you know, pours its waters into the Pacific Ocean. They had crossed the entire country from Pittsburgh to the Pacific, and made the whole trip by water except that terrible journey across the Rocky Mountains.

"It was now November and they were forced to go into camp once more to spend the winter months. In the spring they started on the long journey home again and at last reached Washington, where they told the President about the vast Northwest and what a great country he had purchased from France."

"I'll tell you what let's do," said Benny, after Mr. Norton had finished. "When we start on our trip let's play we are Lewis and Clark 'sploring the country."

CHAPTER XVI

CLOUDBURST ON GREYLOCK

SKINNY says that if they would let him run the weather he wouldn't have it rain daytimes during vacation. All of us Boy Scouts feel that way, too, because, what's the use? The days are made for boys to have fun in and the nights are made to sleep. So, why not have it rain nights when folks are sleeping?

Anyhow, it rained that August as we never had seen it rain before and never want to see it again. It began in the night, all right, just like rain ought to do, but it didn't stop. When day came it seemed to take a fresh start and kept going. It rained all day long and we couldn't have any fun at all. When it came time to go to bed it quit for a spell, but it started up again before morning. It wasn't any drizzle, either. It came down in bucketfuls, until I thought the village would be washed away and that even Bob's Hill would float off.

Along about ten o'clock in the morning it let up, and pretty soon, who should come along but Skinny and Bill, barefooted and with old clothes on. They were worried about the cave, and so was I. While it was raining so hard I thought about it a lot.

You see, our cave is a little below Peck's Falls, on the bank of the brook. There are two entrances. One goes in from the top on the upper side. You first go down into a hole and then wriggle through an opening, until you come out into the real cave. We don't use that one except when we want to escape from the enemy, or something like that.

The one we use is below, right at the edge of the water, and leads straight into the real cave. The floor of the cave is even with the water at the entrance and then slopes back a little out of the wet.

Once a flood filled the cave and nearly drowned us. We should have been drowned, if Tom Chapin hadn't been with us. He dove down through the hole into the upper cave and then pulled us through after him. After that we built a dam so that it

would not happen again. I told all about that once in the doings of the Band. What we were worrying about was the dam's giving way.

Almost always in summer the brook is fine. It pours a clear stream down over the rocks and kind of talks to us and sings, so that we like to be in the cave and listen to it. But sometimes in the spring of the year, when the snow on the mountain is melting and old winter is running away into the valley, and sometimes after very hard rains, the water roars over the falls and then dashes down through the gulch and over the rocks below, like some wild beast. At those times, it is a good place to keep away from, unless you have a dam or a cave that needs looking after.

"Get your hat, Pedro, and come on," said Skinny. "We want to see about the dam. If it washes out the water will fill our cave."

"And bring a shovel," added Bill. "We'd brought one, only your house is so much nearer."

"All right," I told them. "Whistle for Benny, while I'm getting it."

The four of us went up through the orchard

and took the road around the hill to the top because the rain had made it too slippery to climb straight up. We knew by the roaring of the water, long before we came in sight, that Peck's Falls were going it for all they were worth.

When we finally, one after another, crept out on the ledge of Pulpit Rock, in front of the falls, the sight almost scared us. It was great, the way the water came down, fairly jumping from rock to rock, until with a final leap and roar, it plunged, all white and foaming, into an angry pool below; then dashed off, with a snarl, through the ravine.

"Gee-whillikens!" said Skinny. "Those are some falls, all right. How'd you like to go in swimming?"

"It would just about use a fellow up to go through there," I told him. "Boost me up so that I can look down at the cave."

"We'll boost Benny," he said. "He isn't so heavy."

The pulpit part reaches up several feet above the narrow ledge like a wall, and back of it there is a straight drop, a hundred feet or more down.

"The cave is all right, I guess," Benny told us, when we had held him up so that he could see over without getting dizzy. "I can see where the upper entrance is, but, say, the brook is fierce."

We crept off from the rock and made our way carefully down the side of the ravine to the cave.

It was as Benny had said. The dam had held and was keeping the water from flooding the cave. The upper entrance was all right, although it was too muddy to use. The water had backed up around the lower entrance and part way into the cave, but beyond it was dry.

The little mountain brook had turned into a torrent, raging along like some wild beast, and foaming over the rocks below, almost like Peck's Falls. Just above these smaller falls, a tree, which had been carried down into the ravine, stretched across the stream from rock to rock, with its slippery trunk about two feet above the water.

"I guess everything is all right," said Skinny, "but maybe we'd better fix the dam a little. Gee, but it's getting dark in here."

We worked a few minutes, throwing rocks and

dirt against the dam. I had just stood off to say that I thought it would hold now, when Skinny gave an awful yell and slipped off from a rock, on which he had been standing, into the flood.

I made a grab for him and missed, and in a second he was whirled down the stream.

It is queer how much thinking one can do in a second. I thought of the rocks and of the falls below and of how nobody could go through without being pounded against the stones.

I was afraid to look, until I heard another yell. Then we yelled, too, for there was Skinny clinging to the tree which stretched across the stream, just above the lower falls, and yelling to beat the band.

The water pulled and tore at his legs, dragging them under the tree and to the very edge of the rock which formed the falls. On his face was such a look, when we came near, that I knew he could not hang on much longer.

"Hold on tight, Skinny," I called. "We are coming."

It did not take us long to get there, but when we came opposite to where he was hanging we

could not reach him, and the log was too slippery to walk on.

"Can't you work yourself along the tree?" I asked. "We can't reach, and even if we could walk out I don't see how we'd ever get back."

He shook his head in despair.

"I can hardly hold on at all," he told us. "I'll have to let go in a minute, if you don't do something. Get the rope. You always want a rope."

I hadn't thought of the rope which we have kept in the cave since the time I told about, when the flood came near drowning us.

Then Bill, being corporal, pulled himself together.

"Run to the cave for the rope," said he, "while I hold him."

Before we could say a word or stop him, he straddled the tree and began to work his way out, hitching himself along with his hands.

"Run," he yelled again, when he saw us looking with pale faces. "Skinny saved me and I'll save him, if it takes a leg."

We were halfway to the cave before he had

finished speaking. I helped Benny in through the water, holding him to make sure that he wouldn't slip, and in two or three seconds he was out again with the rope.

We found Bill clinging to the slippery tree with both legs and holding Skinny by the collar with both hands. Skinny had a fresh grip and was hanging on for all he was worth.

We tied a slip noose in one end of the rope and threw it to Bill.

"You'll have to let go with one hand at a time, Skinny," I heard him say. "Wait until I get a better grip. Now!"

I saw Skinny let go for a second with his left hand. Bill hung to his collar with one hand and with the other put the loop over his head and under his arm. Then Skinny grabbed hold again and did the same with the other hand.

"Pull her tight, boys. Easy now."

We pulled until the noose tightened under Skinny's shoulders. Then we waded into the water as far as we dared and pulled steadily on the rope. Skinny scrambled along through the water, digging

his finger nails into the bark, with Bill holding on to his collar as long as he could reach.

By the time we had him out it had grown so dark that we hardly could see Bill, but we knew he was out there because we heard him say "great snakes."

"Throw me the rope," he called.

He put the noose around his own shoulders, and with our help was soon standing on the ground.

"I swam her all right," said Skinny, "but I hadn't ought to have done it. Ma told me not to go swimming to-day."

Just as he said that something seemed to shut us in. The light was blotted out and we stood there in the dark, scared and wet, wondering what was going to happen.

We groped our way along until we reached the cave and crawled in through the water. I didn't like to do it because I knew that if the dam should give way the cave would be flooded. But we had made it stronger and we had the rope to climb out by at the upper hole, if the worst should come.

The water didn't reach far into the cave, and

soon we had a light, for we always keep candles and matches there.

It didn't seem so scary when we could see, sitting down together on a piece of old carpet which the folks had given us, where we had sat many times before.

What happened next, they say, was a cloudburst. Something burst, anyhow. Skinny had just grinned and said that he thought maybe it was going to rain, when it started.

And rain! Say, we never had seen it rain before. It came down in chunks and pailfuls. Pretty soon the water began to creep farther into the cave, and we got out the rope and made ready to crawl through into the other part, if it should come much farther.

But the dam held, and there we were, snug and safe, with our candle throwing dancing shadows, and up against one side of the cave, where we had hung it long before, our motto:

"Resolved, that the Boys of Bob's Hill are going to make good."

Then we heard a distant roar, different from

anything we ever had heard before and different from any other noise the storm was making. It scared us because we couldn't think what it was.

"Gee!" said Skinny. "What's broke loose, now?"

"Great snakes!" I heard Bill say. "I wish I hadn't come."

Benny didn't say anything, but he grabbed my hand and by the way he hung on I knew he was doing a lot of thinking.

That roar seemed to be the end of the storm, for the rain stopped as quickly as it had come. It began to grow light again and somewhere in the woods we heard a bird singing.

We were glad enough to get out into daylight once more and make our way back to the road.

"Let's see what it was that roared so," I said. "It isn't going to rain any more and Skinny is nearly dry."

We could see great patches of blue sky and knew that the storm was over.

The roaring had seemed to come from the mountain, so we climbed up the road and went into a

field beyond the woods, from which we usually can see old Greylock looming up, only looking different, it is so near.

This time we couldn't see him at all. The sky was clear overhead, but clouds still hung about the mountain, shutting him from sight.

Then, as we stood there, the noise came again, only worse this time, and right in front of us. The ground seemed to tremble under our feet and from somewhere, back of the cloud which covered the mountainside, came a mighty roaring and grinding that was awful.

We stood there, clinging to each other and wondering if the end of the world had come, when suddenly the cloud lifted and Skinny yelled:

"Look! Look!"

Down the face of Greylock, where before trees had been growing, water was pouring over a great, white scar, which reached from top to bottom, nearly to where we stood, and over to the south was a smaller scar.

"Guess what," said Benny. "Greylock is crying. What do you know about that?"

There had been two landslides, the only ones we ever had known to happen on the mountain.

And to this day, as far as you can see Greylock, you will see those white scars of bare rock, stretching down his face, as if some monstrous giant had clawed him, but, of course, no water after that first time.

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE WAY AT LAST

FOLKS in our town think that white streaks down the face of Greylock do not improve his looks any, but to us boys they seem like scars won in battle. We feel like cheering some mornings, when we see him fighting to break away from storm clouds which wrap him around.

At first we can see nothing but clouds from where we stand on Bob's Hill. Then, the clouds begin to lift a little and Peck's Falls woods gradually come into view. A little later the very tip-top of the mountain begins to show, floating like an island in an ocean of mist. While we look, the clouds fall away still more, making the island larger and larger, and the bottom mists roll up the wooded sides of the hill.

In a few minutes old Greylock throws them off altogether and stands there, with his scars show-

ing, except that across his face a narrow cloud sometimes hangs like a l. lowy screen, giving him, Ma says, a look of majesty as if God was living there.

Anyhow, we boys can't help cheering when the mountain shakes off his bonds and stands forth like a giant Scout, telling us to be cheerful and brave and reverent and all that.

The great rains did more than scar the face of Greylock. They kept us from starting on our trip at the time we had planned to go.

"Wait until the woods dry out," Mr. Norton told us. "The roads are too muddy now to think of starting, and you couldn't have any fun if the woods were wet. A week of sunshine will fix things all right."

We hated to wait, but there was plenty to do getting ready, so that the time did not seem long.

"We'll carry no firearms," he went on. "Guns seemed necessary when this was a wilderness, but we are going over a fairly well traveled road. Scouts do not believe in wanton killing, anyway."

"How about bears?" asked Skinny, anxiously.

"I have made careful inquiries and have not found anybody who has seen a bear along that road in years. I know you found one near the Savoy road, or he found you, but that cub was as badly frightened as you were. Should any of us see a bear, which is not at all likely, I don't believe there is anything in Scout law to keep us from running one way while the bear is running another."

"I don't know about a Scout's running," Skinny told him. "Of course I ran, but I didn't run far, only to the nearest tree, so that I could lasso him better."

"Well, that's all right. Run to the nearest tree and then give the Scout signal. Some of the noises which you boys make, especially William, would scare a whole drove of bears."

"Anyhow, I'm going to carry my rope."

"I'll tell you what we can do. We'll put in the week making bows and arrows. Every boy should carry with him a good bow, made of hickory, hemlock, or mountain ash, and a quiver full of arrows. You never will have a better chance to become experts in archery."

We thought that we would make them of hemlock, because there are plenty of hemlock trees up above Peck's Falls and in Plunkett's woods, but Mr. Norton told us that we ought to make them of seasoned wood. The next day he sent some seasoned hickory over to our barn and we made the bows and arrows of that.

We took a lot of pains with them, and a carpenter that Hank knew helped us some. Before the week was over we had some weapons which Skinny said he knew we could scare a bear with, anyhow. Each Scout's bow was about as long as himself and an inch thick in the center. The ends were shaved down until they bent evenly. For string, we used strong, unbleached linen threads, twisted together. Benny made his bow so stiff at first that he couldn't bend it, but Hank showed him how to shave it down, until he could draw the string back twenty-three inches, like the book says.

The arrows gave us the most trouble because they had to be so straight and round. We made them twenty-five inches long and about three-eighths of an inch thick, and we glued turkey

feathers on near the notched end. The other end we fitted into a brass ferrule, to keep the wood from splitting. The arrows looked fine, when we had them made and painted. Each boy painted his a different way, so that we could tell which one killed the bear.

Mr. Norton showed us how to make guards for the left wrist, to keep the bow cord from striking it. To protect the fingers of the right hand, we used an old leather glove, with the thumb and little finger cut away.

I'll never forget the morning we started. After breakfast the boys, all in uniform, came over to my house. Pretty soon Mr. Norton drove up in a light wagon, loaded with tents, camp outfit, and things to eat.

We greeted him with cheers, and when he had come close gave him the Scout salute.

"Come on, boys. Let's get started, if you are ready," he said. "We have a long walk ahead of us, if we expect to camp on Florida Mountain tonight."

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "That listens good

to little Willie!" And he gave a yell that brought people out of their houses, all up and down Park Street.

"Boys," said Pa, just as we were starting, "remember that your folks are trusting you and, as we understand it, a Scout's honor is to be trusted. Remember, too, that it is a Scout's duty to obey orders and that the one to give you orders while you are away is Mr. Norton. And let me add that he has my full sympathy. If he isn't worn to a frazzle before he gets back, I'll miss my guess."

In another minute we were off, the folks calling good-bys after us and shouting for us to remember this and not to forget that and not to do something else.

Mr. Norton drove the horse at the start because he knew that we would want to march through town, and away we went, with our bows and arrows on our backs, and Skinny, with his rope and hatchet, which he called his tomahawk.

At the Gingham Ground we found the boys of Eagle Patrol drawn up by the side of the road. They saluted and cheered as we passed.

"If we have good luck this time, we'll take you next year," called Mr. Norton. "I'm new at the business, myself, and eight youngsters are all I want to tackle the first time."

"Skinny! Oh, Skinny-y-y!" yelled Jim, when we were almost out of hearing.

We stopped and waited to find out what was wanted.

"Don't kill all the game-e-e. Save some for seed."

Skinny's only answer was to wave his tomahawk. Then we marched on toward North Adams, and at nearly every house we passed people came to the door to see what was going on. It made us feel proud.

We took turns riding, two or three boys in the wagon at a time, because Mr. Norton said that he didn't want us to get all tired out before we started and that we shouldn't be really started until we came to the mountain.

The day was fine and the roads were getting dusty again. We were so happy that almost before we knew it we came to the foot of a hill, which led

up into the mountain, and there we stopped to eat lunch.

Before leaving home, I asked Pa why they called it Florida Mountain and why they called a little town on top Florida, and he said because that was its name. Anyhow, they call 'em that. Before Hoosac Tunnel was built under the mountain, a stage coach made regular trips over it, along the road we were going to take. That was the only way people had to get to Greenfield and the other towns on the east side, without going south to Pittsfield and from there going over Mount Washington on the Boston & Albany Railroad. Now, there is a big hole under the mountain, more than four miles long, and trains go through in a few minutes.

After we had eaten and had a good rest, we started up a road, which we could see winding up the mountainside, far above us.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Norton, "we don't have to make this trip all in one day. We are out for fun and to learn something about scouting; if we climb too far in this hot sun it will get to be work

instead of play. I propose that we climb slowly, taking plenty of time to enjoy the wonderful views that will unfold before us with every turn of the road. You boys can stop whenever you feel like it, to rest, or explore, or shoot. Before we get to the top, we'll pitch our tents near some spring, in full view of the valley and setting sun. We'll plan it so as to have several hours of daylight left after we go into camp for the night. What do you say?"

That suited us all right and away we went, with Benny driving, and the old horse moving along in good shape.

Say, no tunnels for us, after this! Tunnels are all right when you are in a hurry. But were we in a hurry? I guess not!

It was just as Mr. Norton had told us. At every turn of the road, and mountain roads wind around with a lot of turns instead of going straight up, we stopped to look back over the valley. And every time we stopped it looked different. It was great. And the higher we climbed, the better it looked and the farther we could see, until the whole

valley lay before us, all the way to Pittsfield and west toward the Hudson. To the north, the Green Mountains of Vermont looked blue in the distance. Across the valley, on the south, old Greylock put his head up above the other peaks and watched us, wondering, we thought, why we were going up Florida Mountain instead of climbing over him.

"Hurray!" yelled Skinny. "I'm Captain Clark, exploring the great Northwest."

"I'm Captain Lewis," shouted Benny, strutting around and waving his bow.

"Me Injun chief," said Bill. "Ugh! Heap pale face get lost. No find trail. Injun show um way."

Then he gave such a yell that it scared the horse and we hardly could keep up.

About four o'clock in the afternoon we came to a spring near the top of the mountain, and a little beyond, through the trees, we could see a grassy slope, just the place for our camp.

"This looks good to me," said Mr. Norton, driving up to the side of the road and blocking the wheels of the wagon. "We'll give the horse a

drink after he cools off a little and unload the things which we shall need to-night."

It looked like an Indian village there, when we had finished setting the tents up. For beds we went into the woods and cut branches of hemlock, which we wove into mattresses and covered with blankets.

"Let's play 'Hunt the Deer,'" said Skinny, when all was ready for the night and Mr. Norton had sat down to rest on a rock, overlooking the valley.

"All right, boys," he told us. "I want you to have the time of your lives on this trip and I know that even a view like this will not long satisfy a boy. But don't go far and remember your Scout training. You will usually find moss on the north side of tree trunks."

"We know that," said Skinny. "We tried it once on Greylock, when we were lost, and it worked all right."

"You can't get lost. I believe I could hear William call anywhere on the mountain. The sun is shining and your shadows will point east. Come

back in time for supper. I'll be cook to-night, but after this you boys will have to take turns."

"We'll get back in time, never fear," Skinny told him. "We are hungry enough now to gnaw the bark off the trees."

Then he grabbed a bag which was stuffed with hay, put an ear of corn in his pocket, and started.

"Give me ten minutes," he said.

It was a game which we had read about in the book. The stuffed bag was the deer and the corn was for the trail. The game was for Skinny to scatter corn along, making a crooked trail for us to follow, and then to hide the deer somewhere for us to find.

After Skinny had made a good start, we scattered, looking for the trail—corn, footprints, and other signs.

It was great fun and not easy for beginners like we were. Sometimes we lost the trail altogether. Then one of us would pick it up again, where Skinny maybe had doubled back toward the camp.

Finally Bill caught sight of the bag in some bushes and yelled:

"Deer!"

Hank hurried up and called, "Second!" I saw it third and all the boys soon after except Benny. He had lost the trail and was beating around in the woods somewhere, out of sight and hearing.

It was Bill's first shot and he had to stand where he was when he first saw the deer. He took out an arrow, aimed carefully, and fired. The arrow went so fast that I believe it almost would have killed a real deer if it had hit him, but he aimed too high and it went over.

Then Hank stepped five paces toward the deer and shot. He missed. I stepped up five paces more and I missed. Harry went five paces closer and was the first to hit it. After that we all shot from where he had stood, until we all had hit it.

Skinny had come up and I was just asking him if he had seen Benny, when we heard a great crashing through the bushes and in a minute he came in sight, running like sixty.

He was almost tuckered out when he reached us and had only breath enough left to say:

"Run! It's a bear!"

We ran, all right, but after a little I looked back and could see that there was nothing following.

"Hold up—a minute," I panted. "It—ain't a-comin'."

"Where was it, Benny?" I asked, when they had come back. "Where did you see it?"

"I didn't see it. I only heard it. It was stepping around in the bushes and I heard it grunt. I didn't wait to see it."

"I wish I had my rope," said Skinny. "I left it in the wagon. Come on, anyhow. We'll surround the critter and shoot him."

Skinny scared us when he said that. I could feel cold chills chasing up and down my back bone, when I thought of surrounding a live bear.

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "I hope it's a big one, so Skinny can hit it. He couldn't hit a little one."

"I couldn't, couldn't I?" said he. "I'll show

you whether I can hit it or not. Come on. I'll dare you to."

That settled it. We weren't going to take a dare, but I was hoping all the time that the bear had run away. So, with Benny keeping close to me and pointing the way, we crept through the woods, not making any noise, and each boy held his bow and arrow ready to shoot.

It was scary but it was fun. Finally, with an excited pinch of my arm, Benny stopped and pointed.

My heart throbbed like a trip-hammer, and I hardly could hold my arrow on the cord, for, looking through some bushes, I caught sight of something black and heard the bear tramping around.

I heard Skinny muttering something about a rope; then he whispered:

"Get ready, and run as soon as you shoot."

"Aim."

We stood there, trembling, wanting to run first and shoot afterward, but too proud to. Each boy pointed his arrow toward where we could see the

bear standing still behind some bushes and only a part of him showing.

"Fire!"

I don't know when I fired. I only knew that my arrow was gone and I was running for the camp like the wind, with the other Scouts chasing after me.

As we ran, we heard a yell of pain, or fright, and it was not a bear's voice at all. It was a woman's! Then we heard the voice say:

"For the love of Mike! The woods is full of Injuns and I've got an arrow in the pit of my stummick."

CHAPTER XVIII

SCOUTING THROUGH A WILDERNESS

"FELLERS," said Skinny, panting and wetting his lips with his tongue. "We've done it this time. We've killed somebody."

"Killed nothin'!" Bill told him. "Didn't you hear her holler?"

"She's running, too," said Benny. "Killed folks don't run, especially girls."

We could hear a crashing through the bushes beyond, and knew that what Benny said was true.

"Let's sneak back and get our arrows, anyhow," said Skinny, when the noise had stopped.

So we crept back again, ready to run if any one should come, but there was nobody in sight. One arrow was lying on the ground where the girl had been standing when we took her for a bear. It was Skinny's; we could tell by the way it was painted.

AS WE RAN, WE HEARD A YELL OF PAIN, OR FRIGHT, AND IT WAS NOT A BEAR'S VOICE AT ALL.

It made him real chesty, after he had found out that we had not killed anybody.

"Didn't I tell you, Bill," said he, "that I'd show you whether I could hit a bear or not? It must have struck a button or something, or whoever it was would have bit the dust, and don't you forget it."

While we were standing there talking about it, a man burst through the bushes, followed by a girl, about eighteen years old, I guess.

"Are these your Injuns?" he asked, before we had time to run. Then he burst out laughing in such a way that we were not afraid to stay.

In a minute we had found out all about it. They were fern gatherers and Benny had taken them for bears. A lot of people go up on the mountain in August, picking what they call Boston ferns to sell to florists. They put them in cold storage and keep them a long time. There is a crazy little railroad at the foot of the mountain, on the east side, that carries whole train loads of those ferns to Hoosac Tunnel station, and afterward they are shipped all over the country to be put in bouquets.

Skinny's arrow had struck the girl and hurt her a little, but not much. She was scared half to death.

Mr. Norton had a fine supper ready when we reached the camp again, and we ate until we couldn't eat any longer.

"You boys ought to know what you are doing every minute you are in the woods," he told us, after he had heard about the scare. "Suppose that Gabriel had been carrying a gun, as he wanted to, instead of a bow and arrows. Just think what would have happened. Hundreds of people have been killed in exactly that way. Careless hunters have mistaken them for bear or deer or some other game. You ought to have known what you were shooting at. It was a foolish thing to do, anyway. I don't believe there can be any bears around where so many people are looking for ferns and berries. We'll see dozens of pickers on the other side of the mountain, probably. If there ever were any bears they have been frightened away long before this. But suppose that had been a bear. For a bunch of boys to attack a bear with bows and

arrows isn't bravery. It is foolishness. I am ashamed of you."

We didn't feel quite so chesty when Mr. Norton had finished talking to us.

"Well, I am not going to spoil the day by scolding," he went on, after we'd had time to think it over a little. "You can see the folly of it as well as I. Let us sit here and watch the sun go down behind the west mountains. Did you ever see such glory? Then, when it grows dark, we'll build a campfire and I'll tell you about a great scout and a trip he once made through a wilderness."

It was fine sitting there, watching the sun sink into a golden sea behind the mountains, while the valley below was already in the shadow and the dark was creeping up the hillsides.

We sat there a long time without speaking, until finally the golden sea faded into a streak of gray, and up and down the valley we could see the twinkling lights of a half dozen towns and the farmhouses between.

Then Mr. Norton threw an armful of brush on

the coals, and in the light of the blaze, which made the shadows dance like ghosts of Indian braves, he began his story.

"Some of you boys went out to Illinois, last summer," said he, "and I know from what you have told me that you learned much about the great French scout, LaSalle; how he explored the Ohio River and went up and down the Mississippi, taking possession of the country in the name of the king of France. ~~We~~ already have had one story which grew out of those early explorations. The Lewis and Clark Expedition through the Northwest, which I told you about, can be traced back to those scouting trips of LaSalle and the others, on account of which France claimed the country.

"This story is of another scouting trip, long after LaSalle's time and before Lewis and Clark were born, probably. It took place even before the United States was born, but, in a way, it grew out of those same trips of LaSalle and Tonty, Marquette and Joliet, the French explorers of the seventeenth century."

"Was this scout a Frenchman, then?" asked Benny.

"No, he was of English parentage, one of the finest English country gentlemen who ever lived, but born in America, and one of the greatest American scouts.

"He was a friend of yours, too, Skinny," he added, laughing to himself.

"Not me," Skinny told him, shaking his head. "I think a lot more of England than I did, on account of General Baden-Powell and the Boy Scout business, but I don't know this feller."

"That is strange. It seems to me that I have heard you remark something about his being able to lick Napoleon Bonaparte with one hand tied behind his back."

"George Washington!" shouted Skinny. "The Father of his Country. First in——"

"Say, who's tellin' this story, anyhow?" said Bill, pulling Skinny over and sitting on him.

"Yes, George Washington, who, it seems to me, would have made the finest kind of a Boy Scout

in his younger days—a scout worthy of membership in Raven Patrol. He seems to have had all of the Scout virtues. He was trustworthy, loyal to his home and his native land; he was thrifty; he was brave; he was reverent."

"I'll bet he couldn't bandage a broken leg like we can," Benny told him.

"Maybe not, but he could find his way through the forest and he didn't go around shooting at girls, thinking that they were bears. He liked girls too well for that. I believe he liked the girls better, even, than our patrol leader does."

We set up a yell at that.

"Aw, I ain't stuck on no girls," said Skinny. "I just rescue 'em, that's all."

"It's all right," Mr. Norton told him. "A girl is the greatest thing in the world, unless it is a boy. Anyhow, George Washington was a splendid type of American boyhood and he surely liked the girls; used to write poetry about them when he was your age."

I don't know why, but somehow we seemed to think more of Washington after we had heard

that. It seemed to bring him closer to us and make him a real person, instead of a picture on the wall, praying at Valley Forge or crossing the Delaware. Most always Washington is crossing the Delaware when you see him.

"He was a big fellow in the first place, while Napoleon was small. Size of body doesn't always count. Some of the greatest men the world has produced have been small of stature. But George Washington was a big fellow. Like Lincoln, he could outwrestle, outthrow, and outjump any of his mates. They still show a spot down in Fredericksburg where he stood and threw a stone across the Rappahannock River. He didn't seem to know the meaning of fear. From his early youth he was a fine horseman, taming and riding horses that nobody else could manage."

"Did his mother call him Georgie?" asked Benny, before we could stop him.

"Perhaps she did, although I hardly can imagine it. At the age of fourteen George wanted to enter the English navy and he came pretty near doing it. If he had, perhaps he would have become a great

admiral instead of the father of his country. Who knows?

"A midshipman's warrant was obtained for him, so the story goes, and his clothes actually had been sent aboard a man-of-war. Then, at the last minute, his mother found that she could not give up her oldest boy and she withdrew her consent. It was a great disappointment to the boy, but like the good Scout that he was he obeyed his mother and went back to school. He learned to be a surveyor.

"Boys matured earlier in those days when the country was new. When Washington was only sixteen he set out on horseback through the Blue Ridge Mountains on a surveying trip. A year afterward he was given command of the militia in a Virginia district, with the rank of major."

"I don't see what LaSalle had to do with all that," said Harry.

"He didn't have anything to do with it, but he had something to do with the scouting trip which came later. You see, France and England each had obtained a strong foothold in this country; France, along the Great Lakes and Mississippi

River; England, along the Atlantic Coast. Between the Mississippi and the coast stretched a beautiful and fertile country, the valley of the Ohio. When LaSalle made his explorations he took possession of the Mississippi in the name of the king of France. On that account France claimed to own all the land along the Mississippi and along all the rivers which flowed into the Mississippi. That took in a great part of the continent."

"I don't see how because LaSalle stood on a rock and hollered out some words," Hank told him, "that made the whole country belong to France."

"England couldn't see it. Still, the English claim was not much better. Commissioners from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia made a treaty with the Iroquois Indians in 1741. By the terms of that treaty, for something like $2,000, the Indians gave up all right and title to all the land west of the Alleghany Mountains, clear to the Mississippi River. There were all kinds of Indians living in the Ohio Valley but, according to the tra-

ditions of the Iroquois Indians, their forefathers once upon a time had conquered it."

"It looks like six of one and half a dozen of the other," I said.

"There wasn't a white settlement in the whole territory. Some hardy fur traders from Pennsylvania had made trips into the valley and this led to the formation of the Ohio Company of Virginia, with the object of getting ahead of the French and colonizing the lands. Then the French began to get busy. France owned Canada at that time, you know. In 1749 the French Governor of Canada sent three hundred men to the banks of the Ohio River with presents for the Indians. They ordered the English traders out of the country and nailed lead plates to trees, telling everybody that the land belonged to France. The Indians liked the presents well enough, but the lead plates made them mad, when they found out their meaning. One old chief exclaimed:

"'The French claim all the land on one side of the Ohio; the English claim all the land on the other. Now, where does the Indian land lie?'

"I have gone into this explanation in order to make it clear to you why Washington was sent on his scouting trip. Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia wanted to send some one whom he could trust to the French commander, to protest against the French coming into the country. At the same time, he thought the messenger would be able to find out how strong the French were, how many canoes they had, and all that. It was a perilous mission to undertake through an unknown wilderness, with winter coming on. Young Washington was only twenty-two years old, but he was selected as the one to make the dangerous trip.

"Major Washington started from Williamsburg, October 31, 1753. On the frontier he procured horses, tents, etc. Later he was joined by a famous woodsman, named Christopher Gist. They took along a white man to act as interpreter and some Indian guides. Chief White Thunder was one. Another was known as the Half King. His friendship was very important to the English.

"I imagine that the mountains which they went through were much like these, except that rains

and snow had made them almost impassable. The party pushed on, however, and early in December arrived at the first French outpost. The French captain gave a feast in their honor, in the course of which he drank so much wine that it made him talkative. He began to brag of what the French were going to do. He said that they were going to take possession of the entire Ohio Valley. The young American scout kept his head clear and afterward wrote down in a book all that he had heard.

"Then Washington set out again, and after four more days of weary travel they came to the French fort on the west fork of French Creek, about fifteen miles south of Lake Erie. There he delivered his message, and after a great deal of delay received a sealed reply.

"While pretending to be friendly, the French did their best to win the Indian guides away from Washington. They plied them with liquor and with presents, so much so that the young scout had a hard time in starting them toward home. He succeeded finally in getting away. They first

went up the creek in boats as far as an Indian village, called Venango; then set out by land. Soon their pack horses became so jaded that Washington used his saddle horse for a pack horse and walked. After three days of that, he and Gist took their packs on their shoulders, their guns in their hands, and started out alone, on a short cut to the Ohio River.

"You will find the story in any history. At one time a treacherous Indian guide wheeled suddenly and shot at Washington, but did not hit him. The two men quickly overpowered the savage, and Gist was for killing him. Young Washington would not permit that, so they did the next best thing. They took his gun away and sent him home, making him think that they would follow in the morning. Instead of that, they left their campfire burning and traveled all night and all the next day, to get as far away from the spot as possible. At last they reached the Alleghany River, which they hoped to find frozen. There was open water, however, and they were forced to build a raft. All they had to work with was one hatchet,

like Skinny's, I mean Gabriel's. On the way across, a cake of ice struck the raft and threw Washington into the river."

"Gee, I'll bet that it was cold," said Skinny.

"It was, but Washington clung to the raft and finally, in a half-frozen condition, drifted against an island, where the two men camped that night. In the morning they found ice cakes so wedged in that they were able to walk ashore.

"January 16, in the dead of winter, Washington succeeded in reaching Williamsburg, and delivered the French commander's letter to Governor Dinwiddie. Soon after that came the French and Indian war, which I am sure you know all about, in which France lost all her American possessions except the great tract west of the Mississippi, which Napoleon later sold to President Jefferson.

"You see, being a scout in those days wasn't all play. It brought many hardships that we know little about, but, after all, it called for the same kind of boy. Washington was brave and true, helpful, kind, and clean, and he was prepared. When the time came, his preparedness put him in

command of the American forces and afterward made him the first President of the United States."

"Washington was great stuff, all right," said Skinny, shaking his head sadly, "but everything has been discovered now, and explored, and Injuns ain't much good outside a show. There ain't anything for a feller to do any more."

CHAPTER XIX

ON HISTORIC GROUND

WE were one more night on the road before reaching the Connecticut River.

"This trip is going to be a great part of the fun," Mr. Norton had told us, "and the best part of it is that we can go as slowly or as fast as we please. We'll cross over the mountain to-day, stopping whenever we feel like it, and go into camp somewhere on the other side. I want to have you do some of our Scout stunts on the way."

I don't know which was the most fun, walking along the mountain road, which wound through green woods and across laughing brooks, or pitching our camp at night and, after a good supper of our own cooking, listening to Mr. Norton's stories, around the campfire.

We started bright and early in the morning,

carrying only our bows and arrows and Skinny's hatchet. The other things were on the wagon. Mr. Norton drove because we boys wanted to play.

Skinny was George Washington, making his way through the wilderness. He carried the hatchet because he might have to build a raft to get across Deerfield River. Benny was bound to be Christopher Gist. Bill had a right to first choice, on account of being corporal, but Benny wanted to be Gist and Bill didn't care. He said he'd rather be White Thunder, anyhow; it sounded so nice and noisy. Hank said that he'd be the Half King, whatever that was.

"His name was Tanacharisson," said Mr. Norton. "He was a Seneca chief of great note in those days. He was called 'Half King' because he wasn't a whole king. He was under the chief of the Six Nations."

I don't know what the rest of us were, but I do know that we had a fine time, scouting through the forest and along the road. When we came to the town of Florida, on top of the mountain, Skinny told us that it was the Indian village of

Venango, where we'd find the French outposts. He wanted to surround it, but White Thunder was for pushing on because he was getting hungry, although it was still quite early in the forenoon.

So we trudged along, and down the mountain road on the other side, until we came to Deerfield River.

We found a bridge across the river and didn't have to make a raft. There wasn't water enough to float one over the rocks, anyhow, although there was more than usual on account of the big rain.

By night we had left the Florida Mountain far behind. Along in the afternoon of the next day we marched into Deerfield, which is on the Connecticut River. Say, the people came out of their houses to see us pass, with our uniforms on and Skinny in front, swinging his rope and hatchet.

"This is historic ground," Mr. Norton told us. "At the campfire to-night we'll have a story of some fights with Indians which were the real thing. They ought to make your hair stand on end. That stream over there got its name 'Bloody Brook' from one of those fights."

We camped that night on the bank of Connecticut River, and it seemed a long way from home.

"This river was discovered by the Dutch," said Mr. Norton, after we had eaten a big supper and were lying on the river bank in the twilight of the evening, tired and happy. "The permanent settlements, however, were made by the English. The river was explored by a Hollander six years before Gabriel's English ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*. The first English settlements, you know, were made along the Atlantic coast. Some years later a few of those settlers hiked over to the Connecticut Valley, or came up the river, and started a number of towns. One of them was Deerfield.

"It is hard for us to imagine this fertile and cultivated valley in a wild state, with a few white settlers here and there surrounded by Indians. The whites considered themselves a superior race and probably showed it by their actions. Gradually the savages, who at first had been kind, grew more sullen and dangerous. This growing hatred on the part of the Indians made it very difficult for the settlers, but there was another thing which made

it harder. In Europe, two great nations, England and France, were in almost constant warfare, and each was striving to get the better of the other in the settlement and possession of America.

"There were some early Indian wars, with which the French did not have anything to do, but they had much to do with the later wars and attacks by Indians. One of those early struggles is known as King Philip's war, named after a wily Indian chief. It occurred just one hundred years before the Revolution, where our patrol leader lost his ancestor. Even at that early day there were one hundred and twenty-five people in Deerfield. In that war the Indians attacked the town twice."

"Was that what made the brook bloody?" asked Benny.

"No. The bloody event which gave the brook its name happened during the same war but not during an attack on the town itself. September 18, 1675, I believe, was the date. A company of young men, commanded by Captain Lothrup, marched out of the town and along a road leading toward the brook. They were acting as guard and teamsters

for a number of loaded carts, which were being taken to some settler's home. It was a beautiful day and everything seemed as peaceful as it does now. All were happy and there was no thought of danger. Some had even placed their guns in the carts and were walking unarmed.

"At the brook a band of Indian warriors lay in ambush, waiting. On came the young men, laughing and whistling and chatting with one another. They stopped occasionally to gather some wild grapes, which grew along the way. Concealed in the long grass, on each side of the road, lay the painted savages, motionless and unseen. Their eyes gleamed with hatred and exultation as they watched their victims approach. Their eager hands tightly grasped their weapons. Impatient for the slaughter to begin, they awaited the signal."

"Great snakes!" whispered Bill.

"Snakes is the word. Like snakes in the grass they lay, as silent as the grave. At last the signal was given. With fierce cries they sprang upon the surprised whites, and the little brook ran red with blood. Sixty-four men in all, from the various

settlements, were killed that day. Of seventeen young men, who went out from Deerfield that morning, not one returned.

"Too late, another company of men came to the rescue. They found nobody left to rescue. The Indians then were plundering the wagons. The savages outnumbered the rescuing party ten to one, but the little band did not hesitate. They fought desperately for five or six hours. They were unable to drive the savages away, however, and were just going to retreat, when some soldiers from Northampton, down the river, appeared and put the Indians to flight. There was sadness in Deerfield that day."

"I don't believe I want to play Indian any more," said Benny, drawing closer to the fire and looking around as if he might see some savages hiding in the grass. It made us all feel scary.

"We hardly can imagine it now," Mr. Norton went on, "after more than two hundred years. Later there were other wars and many attacks by Indians. The Deerfield people built a stockaded fort, into which all would run at the first alarm.

These later attacks by the savages were a part of the fight between England and France for the possession of America. The French induced the Indians to help them drive the English out, but Englishmen do not drive worth a cent, and at last, as you know, France was obliged to give up Canada to England, in whose possession it has remained ever since.

"First came King William's war, in which Deerfield was attacked several times; then Queen Anne's war, and during that the town was captured and a great part of it burned."

"Tell us about that," I said.

"War is always a terrible thing, but in those days it seems to have been more than usually savage and cruel. Take the capture of Deerfield, for example. The French commander in Canada sent three hundred soldiers to butcher the people in this little town, in order to make himself solid with some Indians. The attack occurred a little before daybreak, and some terrible scenes were enacted. I'll show you an old door up in Memorial Hall to-morrow, which went through that fight. It was

so solid that they could not break it down. You will see where a hole was cut through it with axes and bullets.

"That massacre occurred February 29, 1704, about two hundred years ago. Then came other French and Indian conflicts, until finally England triumphed. Later the United States Nation was born, and President Jefferson bought all of the American territory that France had left.

"Everything is peaceful here now, but think how you would feel, to know that you might be surrounded by savages, fierce and bloodthirsty, creeping toward you in the darkness, without a sound, until near enough to strike, and then——"

All of a sudden there came some awful yells and whoops that made our blood run cold, and a crashing in the bushes that sounded as if all kinds of Indians were after us.

We jumped to our feet and looked, even Mr. Norton. Benny grabbed tight hold of my hand, and I could see Skinny feeling around in the grass for his hatchet.

Then it came again, nearer than before, only

worse and over to one side. It was awful. I don't know about Mr. Norton, but the rest of us were just going to run, when the yell ended with three caws, like a crow in the Bellows Pipe at home.

"Shucks!" said Skinny, in disgust. "It's only Bill Wilson!"

We camped there on the river bank nearly a week and never had more fun in our lives, boating, fishing, swimming, doing Scout stunts and playing Scout games, and, with it all, eating our heads off, almost.

I can't remember every little thing that we did there, and the boys say that it will be all right to skip that part in writing this history. There didn't anything much happen, anyhow, although Mrs. Wade was sure some of us would get drowned and even Ma told us that she would not feel real easy in her mind until we were at home again.

"We'll go a little earlier than we intended," said Mr. Norton, when it was getting near the time for going back. "I want to see some more of that beautiful Deerfield valley, before the river leaves

the mountains. Perhaps we might do a little exploring on our own account."

We came in sight of Florida Mountain on our homeward trip, not far from Hoosac Tunnel. The longest part was behind us, but the hardest part, the climb over the mountain, was ahead.

Wild? Say, if you want to see a wild country, follow Deerfield River as it fights its way down from Vermont, until finally it breaks through the mountains and runs off to join the Connecticut. When you get in among those mountains you will think that you are Christopher Columbus discovering America.

"The Rockies are higher," said Skinny, when we had stopped to rest and look around a little. "I read it in a book. Besides, Mr. Norton told us about Lewis and Clark climbing over them. But these are some mountains all right; believe me."

That was what we all thought. They were all tumbled and jumbled together in a topsy-turvy way, with the river winding around in every direction, trying to get through, and the railroad following the river.

Mr. Norton pointed it out to us and stood there with his hat in his hand, looking. His eyes were shining, and red was coming into his cheeks, as if he was seeing something which we boys couldn't see at all. And maybe he was, for I have noticed that grown folks sometimes can't see and hear the things which we boys see and hear; at any rate, not in the same way.

"What does it make you think of?" he asked each of us.

Benny's answer was the best of all.

"There was once a baseball nine made up of real giants," said he. "They were so big that their heads reached clear up into the sky. One day when they were practising they lost the ball and so they picked up these 'ere mountains and began to throw them to each other, playing catch. Every once in a while some guy would muff the ball, I mean the mountain. Then he would let it lie where it had fallen and pick up another. That is why they are all tumbled together every which way."

"That's so," I said. "You can see where the

dirt jarred off when they fell, leaving the bare rocks sticking out in a lot of places."

"It's alive, boys," said Bill, who had been feeling of Benny's head and looking anxious. "It feels like a nut, but it ain't cracked."

"Benny has given us a good description and something to think about," said Mr. Norton. "I don't believe that I should like to live here all the time, but I should enjoy staying a week and drinking in all this beauty. Talk about music! Hear the mountain breeze in the treetops. What does it remind you of, Gabriel?"

"It sounds to me exactly like beefsteak frying," Skinny told him, "and it makes me hungry. Let's have some eats."

"All right," said Mr. Norton, laughing to himself. "Now that you mention it, I believe that I can detect a faint resemblance. We can't give you beefsteak, but there is some bacon left and that ought to make much the same kind of noise. Whose turn is it to cook?"

"It's mine," Hank told him.

"Well, get busy, and for fear that we might

disturb you, we'll go off somewhere and sit in the shade."

We were all as hungry as wolves when Hank at last called us to dinner and it tasted fine, although my piece was burnt a little.

"I don't know how you boys feel about it," said Mr. Norton, after the dishes had been washed and put away, "but I should like to camp here for a couple of days. We'll do just as you say, however. Perhaps you have had enough."

We all had been thinking the same thing and told him so.

"All right. We'll find a good place for our tents and go into camp. It will give us a chance to wash out some clothes in the river and to explore this delightful wilderness."

We had all kinds of fun practising our Scout stunts, exploring, playing Indian, and things like that. One of the prettiest places that we found was a ravine, where two cascades, twins, tumbled over rocky ledges; then came together and raced down the mountain. I don't mean that they were as pretty as Peck's Falls, above our cave. They

don't make any finer places than that, only, of course, Niagara Falls are bigger. But they were worth looking at, just the same.

I am going to put down just how to get there, in case somebody should want to see them. You probably wouldn't walk over the mountain, as we did, because it takes so much time, but would go through Hoosac Tunnel. After you have gone through from the North Adams side and the train stops to take off the electric engine and put a steam one on, get off and walk back to the mouth of the tunnel. Then, when you have come to the mountain, climb up a sort of path, following the brook, and after a little you will come to the twin cascades. We thought of camping there at first, but couldn't find any good place for our tents.

Except for the train passing and the engineer leaning out of the cab window, we seemed out of the world, although we were not more than ten miles from home, in a straight line. The train was like company, and when we were around near we always watched it out of sight.

That is a queer little railroad which comes down

from Wilmington and Readsboro, Vermont, as far as Hoosac Tunnel station. Mr. Norton told us all about it. It is what they call a narrow gauge railroad. That means that the rails are closer together than on most railroads, and on that account regular cars cannot run on it. Its rails are three and a half feet apart, while on a regular railroad they are four feet, eight and one-half inches apart. It runs along one bank of Deerfield River, a few feet above the water. The river is mostly stones in summer, with water in between.

The day after we camped there Skinny, Bill, Benny, Hank, and I sat on a big stone, opposite our camp, waiting to see the train go by. The other boys had gone with Mr. Norton part way up the mountain, looking for berries for our supper.

Pretty soon the train came in sight from toward Readsboro, fifteen miles north, and it was swinging along at good speed, for it was downhill.

We cheered and waved our hats as it went by. I noticed a girl, who was sitting at one of the windows in the passenger car, give a look of surprise when she saw us; then she leaned far out and

waved her handkerchief. It wasn't anybody that I knew, but when Skinny saw her he jumped to his feet and let out a yell. And what he said was:

"Mary!"

It surprised us some. You may not believe it, but the girl was Mary Richmond, the one Skinny walked down the mountain with, that time he lassoed the bear, when he was doing his hike to Savoy and back. She had been up to Readsboro with her mother, visiting.

"Come on," said he, starting on a run. "She'll have to change cars at Hoosac Tunnel station."

"Aw, what's the use?" said Bill. "We don't know her."

At that instant, while we stood there watching, we saw the engine give a sudden lurch and then go bumping over the ties. In another moment it struck a rock or something and, with an awful crash, the whole train went off the embankment into the river below.

CHAPTER XX

SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE

YOU may have heard of that wreck, for the papers printed a lot about it at the time.

After the first crash, there was not a sound. I don't know how long we stood there, paralyzed with horror, staring at the place where the train had been. Then we heard a shriek of fear, or pain, we couldn't tell which, and it was a girl's voice.

That shriek brought us to our senses.

"Scouts to the rescue!"

Skinny shouted at the top of his voice, hoping that Mr. Norton and the others would hear, and we started on a run.

Before we had gone halfway Skinny turned to Benny.

"Run back to the camp," said he. "Get the bandages and other first-aid things."

"And bring my rope and hatchet," he called, over his shoulder.

The awful stillness after that first shriek sent us on faster than ever, while something seemed to clutch at our throats so that we hardly could breathe.

Bill got there first, but we were not far behind. When we had come close we could see the train, lying on the stones in the river bed. The engine had turned bottom side up and lay there on its back with its wheels in air. The passenger car was on its side and was so badly smashed that it didn't look like a car at all.

"We've got to have help and have it quick," said Skinny, looking almost pale. "Who'll go to Hoosac Tunnel station for help? Hank, you go, and run like Sam Hill."

Hank was off like a deer before the words were out of his mouth, running toward the station, nearly two miles away.

"Mary!" called Skinny. "Mary! Where are you?"

"Here," we heard a faint voice say. And,

climbing down, we found her, wedged in between some timbers so that she could not move.

"Are you hurt?" we asked, as we commenced to pry her loose.

"A little," she told us, beginning to cry. "I don't know how much, but I'm all right for now. Find mamma. I don't know where she is."

After a little search we found her, nearly covered with timbers and bleeding from a cut in her head.

"She's dead," I whispered, while an awful feeling came over me. Her eyes were closed and she didn't move, even after we had lifted the timbers away.

We dragged her out as gently as we could and laid her on a couple of car seats which we took from the train. I sprinkled some water in her face and pretty soon she opened her eyes.

She stared around for a second or two, trying to understand where she was. Then she saw Skinny and seemed to remember.

"Mary!" said she. "Have you seen Mary? Oh, save my little girl!"

"Mary's all right," Skinny told her. "We

haven't got her out yet, but we know just where she is. She sent us to find you."

"Thank God!" she whispered, and then she fainted again.

We left her there, lying among the stones on the river bottom, with her dress floating in the water.

"I wish Mr. Norton was here," groaned Skinny. "I don't know what to do. Here comes Benny with the things."

There wasn't any time to talk. We hurried back to where we could see Mary's head sticking out of the wreck. She had her eyes closed, and I thought she had fainted, but she heard us come up and opened them.

"We've got your mother out," Skinny said. "Now we'll get you out."

Her eyes asked the question which her lips couldn't seem to do.

"Yes, she's alive," we told her. "She's got an ugly cut on her head, but she seems all right except that."

It was all we could do to get her out, the timbers were so heavy and so wedged in. They had fallen

across each other and made sort of a roof over her. If it hadn't been for that she would have been killed. By all pulling on the rope and cutting some with the hatchet, we finally managed to get her loose.

When we started to lift her out she screamed with pain. We kept on lifting. There was no other way.

"It's my foot," she moaned. "It feels as if it was all broken to pieces."

Two of us made a chair with our hands and carried her carefully up on the river bank; then hurried back to the wreck.

"There is a man groaning somewhere," said Bill. "I think it must be the conductor."

We found him lying under some wreckage and in great pain.

"Where are you hurt?" we asked, when we had lifted the wreck off from him.

"My leg!" he groaned. "It's broken. I'm all in."

I took out my knife and ripped his trouser leg and underclothes to above the spot that hurt him,

a little above the knee. Then, by putting one hand above the break and the other below it, just as Mr. Norton had made us practise doing a lot of times, and lifting very gently I could see the broken bone move. He ground his teeth together and great drops of sweat came out on his forehead, it hurt him so much, although I was trying to be careful.

"It's broken, all right," I told him. "We've sent for help. The only thing to do is to lie still and wait."

We straightened him out and piled some coats and things, which we found in the wreck, around his leg, to make him as comfortable as we could.

"How many are there?" I asked.

"I only had two passengers, a woman and a little girl. They got on at Readsboro. Then there was the engineer, fireman, and brakeman, besides myself. We run only a small crew on this train."

The brakeman came up while he was speaking. He had been stunned at first and when he came to had managed to crawl out.

"Have you seen Jim or George?" he asked.

The conductor shook his head.

"Do you boys know anything about the engineer and fireman?"

We hadn't thought of them before. We had been too busy.

"Then they are under the engine," said he.

He ran through the river to the head of the train, we after him, almost crazy with the thought of those men at the bottom of that awful heap of iron and steel. We pulled and lifted at the great pieces, but we might just as well have tried to move the mountain.

"We can't do it, boys," the brakeman said, at last. "We'll have to wait for help. There isn't one chance in a hundred that they are alive, but they may be. Somebody will have to run to the station and make sure that they bring some jacks. I am 'most done up and don't feel equal to it. Which one of you will go? Only one, now; the others will be needed here."

"I'll go," said Benny. "I'm the littlest one in the bunch and can be spared the easiest. What was that you said you wanted?"

"Jacks; to jack up the engine frame with. There

are several in the baggage room. I saw them there."

Benny hated to leave, when there was so much going on, but before the brakeman had finished speaking he was climbing up on the river bank. In another second he had started down the track on a run.

"Now, fellers," Skinny told us, trying to keep his teeth from chattering, he was so excited, "our Scout book says for us to keep cool and we've got to do it. While we are waiting for help the thing for us to do is to be Scouts and to get busy with our bandages."

"And make some stretchers," added Bill. "We can't use our coats and hike sticks, like the book says, because we didn't bring 'em."

"That's easy. We can use car seats."

The "first-aid kits," which Benny had brought from camp, had everything that we needed. That was what they were put up for, only we didn't think we should need them. There were shears and tweezers, carbolized vaseline, sterilized dressings for wounds, to keep the germs out, all kinds of ban-

dages and things like that. Say, we looked like a drug store when we had fairly started.

Skinny cut away the shoe from Mary's foot and Bill brought cold water from a nearby spring, to bathe it in. The foot was bruised and the ankle sprained, but no bones were broken. Soon they had her feeling better.

I went to help Mrs. Richmond, but all the time I was thinking of the men under the engine. She was sitting up on the car seat, trying to keep her feet out of the water.

"Are you hurt anywhere else, except your head?" I asked.

"No," she said. "I have had a bad shock and my head is cut, but I can move all my limbs; so I guess there are no broken bones."

Her head looked worse than it was, with a gash cut in it and her hair matted down with blood.

"I don't dare bathe the cut," I told her, "because the water may be full of germs, and besides I haven't anything to bathe it with. The book says to be careful about that."

"What does the book say about my washing my

face?" said she, and she didn't wait for an answer.

It didn't take long to put on a sterilized dressing and bandage her up in good shape. Then, with Skinny on one side and I on the other, she managed to walk to a low place on the river bank, where Mary was waiting, and climb up.

Mrs. Richmond said so much about how we had saved her and her little girl, it made us feel foolish.

"That ain't anything," Skinny told her. "That's what Scouts are for."

"It may be a long time before a doctor gets here," I said, after a little. "He will have to come from North Adams or Readsboro. And that conductor is getting worse every minute. If you will help me, Skinny, I'll try to put splints on his leg."

You see, I had practised with the splints more than some of the boys had. They were all for saving folks from drowning.

We first found two pieces of board. There were plenty of them scattered around, on account of the wreck. We put one piece, which was long enough

to reach from his armpit to below his foot, on the outside of the leg. The other we put on the inside. It didn't have to be so long, but reached well below the knee. Then, making sure the broken bones were in place, we tied the splints on with strips from Skinny's shirt, first putting a cushion of leaves between the boards and the leg. After that we tore up Bill's shirt and tied the broken leg to the good one with three or four strips of that.

"Do you suppose that we can get him up on the river bank?" asked Skinny, when we had him all fixed.

"We must," a quiet voice answered.

Turning, we saw Mr. Norton, who had come up so still that we had not heard him.

"Oh, Mr. Norton!" cried Skinny. "We are so glad you have come. It is an awful wreck and nobody to do anything at first but us, and we didn't know what to do. I think the engineer and fireman were killed. The brakeman is over there, trying to get them out."

"You seem to have done remarkably well for boys who didn't know what to do. I want two

poles from the woods, Gabriel. Quick! William, you go with him. John will help me here."

Skinny grabbed his hatchet, and before we had time to miss them the boys were back again with two long poles. While they were away Mr. Norton and I pulled two car seats out of the wreck and were ready to make a stretcher. By laying the seats end to end on the poles and tying them fast with Skinny's rope, we had a good one and not bad to ride on, because of the springs.

Then Mr. Norton and the brakeman, with us boys helping all we could, lifted the conductor very carefully and laid him on the stretcher. To lift it by the ends of the poles and carry it up to the river bank was the easiest part of all.

By that time, Hank and Benny had come back with two or three men from Hoosac Tunnel station, and they went to work with jacks to get the engineer and fireman out.

"A special train is coming from Readsboro," Hank told us. "It's bringing some doctors and the wrecker."

"Do you feel able to continue your journey, Mrs.

Richmond?" Mr. Norton asked. "We could manage to carry the little girl as far as the station and there is a train due from North Adams in about an hour. Or would you rather wait for the special and go back?"

"I think we'd better go back to Readsboro," she said. "We have friends there and I don't feel much like walking."

We didn't have long to wait, for the train soon came puffing down the valley. Two doctors jumped off before it had time to stop and hurried over to where we were standing. They were surprised some, when they saw the people all bandaged up.

"Who did this?" asked one of them, standing over the conductor. "I thought there were no surgeons here. Did you succeed in getting somebody from North Adams?"

"These boys," Mr. Norton told him. "They are Boy Scouts and have been in training some time for this very job."

The doctor gave a little whistle.

"Good thing for him," he said, "that they were

around. I couldn't have done it much better, myself."

We felt proud when he said that, and I could tell by the way Mr. Norton smiled at us that he was feeling pretty good over it.

All the same, the doctor bandaged him over again, to make sure that everything was all right. When he had finished, the hurt ones were put on board the train and made as comfortable as possible. We heard some cheering over by the wreck and hurried back to find out what had happened.

"They are alive," a man explained. "We've jacked her up a little, and the engineer just spoke to us. He says that the fireman is alive, too."

It made us feel better to know that they were alive, and the men worked like sixty to get them out. By that time the wrecking crew had the big crane ready. After that it was easy. It didn't take long to swing the heavy frame clear of the ground and to one side.

The two men were found somewhere in the mass, badly hurt but alive, which was more than we could understand.

They were lifted out as carefully as possible and carried to the car.

"Good-by, boys!" called Mary out of the window.

"Good-by! God bless you, dear children!" said Mrs. Richmond.

"Good-by,—good-by," yelled the brakeman.

The doctors were too busy to say good-by to anybody. We watched the train steam up through the valley; then Mr. Norton took each one of us by the hand, and he squeezed hard.

We heard afterward that both men got well, although many weeks passed before they were able to work again.

We started for home, bright and early the next morning, taking all day for the climb over the mountain and camping that night among the foothills on the west side. It was only six or seven miles from there home, and we were so tough and hard that it didn't seem far.

"We can do it in two hours, easy," said Skinny.

We were beginning to be in a hurry to see our folks and the cave, after being away so long.

"Let's get home in time for breakfast," I said. "What do you say?"

"And go without eatin' until we get there? Not much!"

"We can have an early breakfast," Mr. Norton told us, "and start as soon as we can see; say, about four o'clock. We ought to be able to make it by seven, easily, and I feel sure that we shall be able to eat again, after our walk. I'd like to get home early, myself. It is time that I was going back to work after my vacation."

That is what we did, and we surprised everybody. They had not been expecting us before afternoon.

After that we didn't see anything of Mr. Norton for several days. Then he asked us to meet him at a campfire on Bob's Hill, Saturday evening.

"I have spoken to your parents," he told us, "and they have arranged for a picnic in Plunkett's woods, Saturday afternoon. We will eat supper together on the grass, at the edge of the woods, and afterward have a campfire at the old stone. I think that we owe it to your people to make a sort of

official report of what we did on our trip; that will be a good time to do it."

That was some picnic, all right, and it was great fun, sitting there, talking and eating; then playing Indian in the woods, surrounding the palefaces, and all that. But, best of all, was the campfire, after the sun had gone down and the moon lighted up the hills and made old Greylock loom up big and shadowy. Of course, we had told our folks all about everything but they wanted to hear more, and we had to tell it all over again.

Finally Pa spoke up. "We have heard a great deal from the Scouts," he said, "and we have enjoyed it all. Now, we'd like to hear from the Scoutmaster, how the boys behaved. But first I want to tell him how grateful we all feel for what he is doing for these youngsters."

"I am enjoying it as much as they are," said Mr. Norton, looking fine as he stood there, with the moonlight on his face. "In fact, I think that I am getting more out of it than they are. I asked you fathers and mothers to meet me here to-night because I wanted to tell you how proud I am of

these Bob's Hill boys, the Boy Scouts of Raven Patrol. I understand that in their cave at Peck's Falls they have a motto hanging, which says that 'The Boys of Bob's Hill are going to make good.' They have made good, Mr. Smith, every one of them."

He hesitated a moment; then went on:

"I have made official application for Honor Medals for the part they took in saving human life at that unfortunate train wreck, and I hope the National Court of Honor will award them. But I, myself, have wanted to do something personally to show the boys how much I have enjoyed their companionship and what I think of their conduct—all of them, not only those who happened to be on hand at the time of the wreck. So I have had this banner made to hang under the other one, in the cave, or wherever their place of meeting may be."

He pulled out a fine silk banner from his pocket, as he spoke, and shook it out until it hung full length in the moonlight, and, looking, we saw in one corner a black raven and "Patrol 1, Troop 3

Mass."; then, in large, gold letters, the Scout motto:

"BE PREPARED."

How we did cheer! And our folks cheered louder than anybody.

"Guess what!" said Benny, after all was still again. "When we grow up, we are going to try and be like Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster."

"Bet your life we are!" shouted Skinny, springing to his feet and waving the banner.

Then he stopped and stood there, looking at us, with his arms folded.

"I have spoken," said he. "Let be what is."

THE END

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